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BARNEY BLAKE, THE BOY PRIVATEER;

Or, The Cruise of the Queer Fish.

BY HERRICK JOHNSTONE



WITH A LUSTY CHEER THEY BID GOOD-BY TO THE SHIP.

"Dat's so. I wonder who did it?" Snollygoster asked.

Every one else had some suggestion to make, but the deer of the deed was not found; and Dicky Drake swallowed his fury, reslung his hammock and turned in.

We were all tired and sleepy. I, at least, was soon in the arms of Morpheus, dreaming of the land I had left, and of the bright eyes that would look as long in vain for my return.

CHAPTER IV.

A PRIZE AND A JOHN BULL.

BUTLER. Footman, why art so happy? Art going to be married?

FOOTMAN. No, meester.

BUTLER. What thou art married already, and art going to be divorced?

F. No, meester.

BUTLER. What then?

F. I've drawn a prize.

—OLD PLAY.

I was awakened about daylight by a tramping on deck, and presently Tony Trybrace's snarl boatwain's whistle pealed out, followed almost immediately by his merry voice with:

"Tumble up, tumble up, you lubbers, if you care for prize-money!"

Every one heard what he said, and every one was on deck in a twinkling.

The morning was just dawning, and, far off, sea against the vast brightening sky, a sail was visible. I was rather provoked at having been summoned up from my nap, because the vessel was a good five miles off, and, if it was to be a stern chase, a long time would elapse before we could bring her to. Nevertheless, as I was on deck, and as my watch would be on hand in an hour, I thought I might as well stay up and see the thing out.

The men were all stationed, as if for battle, as was the custom of the captain on the slightest provocation. There was certainly the safest and wisest plan, but sailors seldom lose a chance for grumbling. Our little captain himself, however, if he brought the men up to the mark, never failed to toe it himself. There he was, standing on the poop in his merriest mood. He was always familiar with us, and now he had a smart word for everybody.

"Take a peep through my telescope and tell me what you think of her, Barney."

This was addressed to me, and as there was something peculiar in the request, I was not slow to comply. I sighted the strange craft well and examined every inch of her as well as the imperfect light would permit.

"Well, well, well," said the captain, impatiently. "What do you make of her?"

"She's a British brig," I replied. "She was built in London. Her name is the Boomerang. Her captain's name is George Willis, and she's very probably loaded with rum and sugar for Jamaica."

"The captain was astonished."

"Are you crazy?" he ejaculated.

"I sincerely hope not, captain," was my smiling reply.

"How do you know what you say to be true?"

"Because I made a six months' cruise in that brig, captain, and I know every spar and ratlin of her from the mainmast-peak to the forward spankers."

"Well, if that is so, you certainly are the Son of a Sea-Cook all over and a sailor worth promoting," said Captain Joker, laughing as he spoke. "Clap on more sail!" he bawled. "Let out the r'ials to the full! Loosen the jib-sheets! I'll catch the stranger if I have to scrape the sky for him!"

We sprang into the shrouds, and his orders were promptly executed. The gale, which had been stiff before, also blew stronger, and we bounded from crest to crest like a sea-bird under the influence of a fresh breeze. But when the sun arose we were still three miles from the stranger, who evidently had a suspicion of our character and was cracking on all sail for escape. But we now let out our skysails and came down on her rapidly. Our masts fairly groaned under the added incense. We actually seemed lifted from billow to billow, rather than to plow through them.

At eight bells we were a mile and a half from the flying ship and fired a shot from our swivel to tell her so. We saw the shot dance off and kick up the spray right under her bows, but she ran up the Union Jack of England and kept on her way. Another shot from our bow-gun had no better effect. We, however, kept on our way, still within a mile, when we let fly again with the swivel, this time striking the vessel in the stern, and sending up a shower of splinters.

We thought this would bring her to. But, she was plucky, and seemed determined to show fight. Scarcely had the boom of our Long Tom died away before a column of smoke shot out from the stern of the merchantman, and before we could fairly make up our minds as to what was going to happen, the end of our bowprit was knocked off like a pipe-stem, as well as a big splinter gouged out of our mainmast by a thirty-two pound shot.

"The ship is deemed not to be taken alive," said Tony Trybrace.

"We'll see about that!" exclaimed our little captain; "just let me have a shy at her with that bow gun!"

While he jumped down from his station on the poop, sighted the bow-gun carefully, and, just as we rose majestically on the summit of a huge wave, let her off. The ball danced over the crests with a charming ricochet, and we saw it strike the stranger fair and broad in the center of the mainmast, which instantly went to the board, trailing a tangled mass of rigging and canvas into the sea.

"I thought she'd think better of it, after a little while," exclaimed the captain, triumphantly. "The enemy is now in our power, lowered in token of surrender, and, at the same time, she hove to. We came on with a rush, and hauled to close under her bows."

"What ship is that?" bawled Captain Joker through his trumpet.

The brig, Boomerang, of London," was the reply.

"What are you loaded with?"

"Rum and sugar."

"Just stand where you are, and consider yourself a prize," we were told, you Son-of-a-Sea-Cook," added the captain, turning to me. "I'll promote you as soon as I get a chance."

A boat was immediately lowered, placed in command of Pat Pickle, the second mate, and in her a dozen sailors, lashing their pulley for the prize. It hoarded her, and she came up to our largest expectations. I here had the satisfaction of renewing my acquaintance with my old skipper, Captain Willis, as well as some of the crew. They all expressed their surprise at finding me in the character of a privateer's man, at which I was not at all put out, but recommended them to merciful treatment, and succeeded in enlisting three of the crew, who were Canadians, for a cruise on the Queen.

There was an Englishman on board the Boomerang, who was a passenger, but as he admitted that he was a consul to the South-American port of Rio de Janeiro, we made a prisoner of him in short order. This worthy will bear a brief description. He was not the most genuine example of the John Bull cockney genus it had ever been my fortune to fall in with. Rather short—about five feet and a half, I should judge—he weighed fully two hundred pounds, was dressed in the regular London plaid trowsers, gaiter shoes and bell-crown hat of the time. His features were red and coarse, and his hair as red as fire. His name was Mr. Adolphus de Courcy. His indignation was in his countenance, and his pride was extreme, but, as the second mate didn't look as if he could bear much bullying, the dignitary reserved his spleen for the captain's ears.

Well, after we had supplied the Quaker Fish with a little rum she would be likely to consume it in six months, we put a prize crew on board the Boomerang, and started her for home, leaving her captain and crew on board. We brought off Mr. Adolphus de Courcy, determining to keep him until we had a chance to win some money, and then whose safe-keeping we could transfer him. It took several hours to complete all these arrangements, but they were completed at last, and we rowed back to the Quaker Fish, leaving the prize crew on board. Shortly afterward, the two vessels parted company.

As soon as we were on our own deck once more, Mr. Adolphus de Courcy strode up to our little captain with a majestic air.

"Ave I the honor to address the captain of this trading craft?" he asked in a most grandiloquent way.

"My name is Captain Joker, and this ship, which I have the honor and good fortune to command, is the Quaker Fish, a regular letter-of-marque, commissioned by the United States Government."

"Very well, all I have to say is, as 'ow I consider this transaction a very outrageous fair-raid; and I demand hinstant release from 'ur villainous ship."

"By this time the Boomerang was a mile or two away, and I saw a merry gleam in the little

eyes of Captain Joker, which was premonitory of some fun.

"How can I release you now, sir?" said he, with an air of some concern.

"No matter how, I demand hinstant release from 'this villainous vessel," exclaimed the cockney, thinking that he had succeeded in browbeating the captain, and that he should now have it all his own way.

"I understand you to mean what you say?" asked the captain.

"Exactly!" was the lively reply. "I demand a hinstantaneous deliverance from this vile captivity! I demand it as a peaceable citizen of hold Hingland, whose broad brows is powerful as the bon the land hand bon the briny deep."

"All right, sir, you shall have your wish; only be careful that you do not change your mind, as it will be of no use. Trybrace" added Captain Joker, singing out to the boatswain: "Have that little rig p'ovisioned for two days, put in this little men's luggage, then put him in, and cut him loose. He wants to leave the Quaker Fish."

"Ay, ay, sir," sung out Tony, cheery as a cricket, and immediately set about giving the necessary directions.

"I wish you a good-morning, sir," said, with this Captain Joker bowed courteously to the cockney, and retired to the precincts.

Mr. Adolphus de Courcy appeared at first unable to comprehend what was to be done with him; but, when the truth dawned that he really was to be turned adrift, he seemed perfectly stunned.

"Will you have the kindness to explain this 'ere little arrangement?" he said, going up to Tony, who was busily superintending the outfit of the little boat.

"Ain't got no time, sir. The captain's orders were positive, and he ain't in the habit of repeating them. Clew up that gear at the bows, you lubbers. And cawl up that 'ere seam in the labboard side. Do you suppose the gentleman wants ter go to Davy Jones's Locker afore he gets well started on his way? Put in the water-tight seal on the hatch. Now for the gentleman's luggage. All right! Lower her!"

The arrangements were all completed, and the little craft was lowered from the davits over the stern. She was so small, and her cargo was so great, that she settled down almost to the gunwales, and it was questionable how long she would float after the bulky form of the cockney should have occupied the small amount of room left vacant for him at the stern.

We all preserved a solemn silence. The stretched Englishman, after determining himself that it was a good joke until the final preparations left no room for a doubt.

"All ready, sir," said Tony, touching his hat respectfully. "Will yer Honor be pleased to step into yer Honor's craft?"

"Hut! Yer very good joke hindered!" exclaimed the cockney, with a forced laugh. "A very good joke! 'Ave you got out a patent for it? I should like to 'ave it, to introduce into hold Hingland."

"It is a joke, as at all, yer Honor," said Tony, as sober as a judge. "Will yer Honor condescend to make haste? We can't stand in the middle of the ocean in this way, while there's so much prize-money lyin' about loose."

"My very good joke hindered!" exclaimed the cockney affectionately by the hand. "Ave you the serious intention of periwinding a fellow 'uman being with such han' houtit, and consigning him to the mercy of the wast and 'aveing home?"

"The law, yer orders, sir."

"I then demand to see the captain of this villainous craft hinstantaneously."

"All right, sir. Dicky Drake, jist tell the skipper as how the gentleman wants to bid him good-bye."

The message was sent, and Captain Joker made his appearance almost immediately. His face was beaming with cordial farewells as he advanced with outstretched hand toward the dumfounded de Courcy.

"Oh, very good-bye, my dear fellow, and a prosperous voyage!" he exclaimed, shaking him warmly by the hand.

"Captain, I want to know as 'ow—"

"No thanks! no thanks! my dear sir! I make you prize me for the honor of having there, good-bye!" and the captain, in the zeal of his farewell, almost thrust the poor fellow over the bulwarks.

"But," persisted the latter, "I want to know as 'ow—"

"I tell you I will not hear any thanks at all! There, there, farewell!"

The crew now crowded forward, with similar well-wishes, and the unfortunate cockney was fairly hustled over the ship's side into the trail gig, which was almost swamped by his weight.

"There are the oars, sir," sung out the captain. "I hope you will find them easy to your hands. Farewell! *Bon voyage!* Cut her loose, lads!"

The order was executed at once, and the boat, with its occupant, drifted off. At the same moment we let out our main sheet and continued on our course. We looked back over the stern, and saw the little boat going up and down in and out of the troughs of the great swells, with its occupant sitting in the stern, looking the very picture of despair.

You needn't suppose that Captain Joker was cruel enough to leave the cockney in this predicament. He merely wanted to give him a lesson in good manners. And, just as the gig and its occupant were almost out of sight, we rounded to and bore down for her, tacking against the strong breeze. To show you the captain's kindness of heart, just as we were preparing to round to, we signaled on our starboard bow. Ten chances to one it was another prize, and the temptations to keep on our course were exceedingly strong in us all, especially in the skipper, who was as fond of prize-money as any man I ever saw. Nevertheless, in obedience to my order, we bore down for the gig. The mean old dog of a first mate undertook to argue him into leaving the Englishman to his fate, when he was met with a stern rebuke.

"Is 'Saunders'?" (that was the name of the first mate) said he, "if you have nothing but such heartless cruelty to urge, I will beg you to defer your suggestions to a more fitting occasion. I am compelled to say, sir, that your heartlessness—not to say avarice—is astonishing, sir, astonishing!"

Just as the first mate said that a flinty-minded old Sawney as Saunders. When we had got pretty close to the gig, the forlorn, disconsolate aspect of Adolphus de Courcy was too much for me, and I was unwilling to endure with solemnity, and I broke out in laughter, as did the entire ship's company, who were all congregated forward, looking over the bows.

At a look from the captain, Tony Trybrace sang out:

"Look you your Honor like to come aboard?"

A motion of the Britisher's head signified his assent to the proposition, and, with great difficulty, owing to the roughness of the running sea, we grappled the boat, and hoisted the entire campoodle, bag and baggage, to the deck of the Queen Fish.

The cockney had long ago resigned himself to despair, and when he found himself safe and dry at last, the revulsion was too great, and he burst into tears.

Captain Joker went up and took him by the hand, saying:

"My dear fellow," said he, "I had no intention of cutting you adrift more than temporarily. It seemed to me that the tone which you assumed to me, on board my ship, was so very extraordinary for a prisoner to address his captor, that I felt it a lesson of this kind would never be bestowed in any other way. I do not say, sir, if I have caused you any pain, you complained me to do so, and I'm sorry for it. As long as you remain upon my ship, pray consider my cabin your own. I would treat you as a guest rather than as a prisoner. Pray dine with me to-day. And dinner is almost on the table."

This magnanimity almost crushed the poor prisoner. He dried his tears, and said in a much manlier voice than heretofore, as he grasped the hand of his generous foe:

"Captain, you say the good ones to treat me like a gentleman. This 'ere is returning good for evil with a vengeance, and I be back to acknowledge that I am almost crushed by your noble hand-related sentiments."

At that they went down into the cabin together, and from the way we heard the corks popping, they must have had a jolly time.

The lesson was not lost upon the cockney. His tone to everybody was thereafter greatly improved. He remained for some time with us, and though we frequently amused at his vanity and his antipathy to the sea, he said we found him, in the main, a pretty good fellow.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER PRIZE—FISHING FOR SHARKS. It was on the third day following our event narrated in our last chapter that we fell in with another—our second prize. She was a noble

East Indiaman, a ship that could almost have picked up our own ship privately and carried her at her stern like a yawl, had it not been for the difference of the cannon we carried. But, of course, that made all the difference in the world.

She was loaded with silks, spices and precious fruits, and was immensely valuable. We had a brisk chase after her, but brought her to in an hour by a shot from our irresistible amidships gun. A large number of passengers were on board, which made a disposal of her somewhat uncomfortable. We had to deplete our ship's company again by putting a prize crew on board. But we, here again, had some consolation in this, inasmuch as we received several recruits from the crew of the prize.

We had struck a bee-line southward some days before, and were now approaching the equator—the days not growing much cooler in consequence. One day, when we had got becalmed, the whole ship's company (almost) went in bathing, and a thrilling incident was the result.

The captain, always glad to make the men happy, had caused the mainsail to be staked over the bows, and had caused the foremast to be hanging yards, the belly of the canvas making a long dip in the brine, thus making a delightful shallow for the more timid swimmers to exercise their talents in, while bolder spirits might strike out to any distance they pleased. A shark, however, and a couple of sharks, in the mid-sea tropical bathing, on account of the sharks, which are always more or less numerous in the wake of a ship.

Well, we all had an excellent time in the water, and were not in a hurry to come out. The captain, in a spirit of laughing at us, and had gone below for a siesta.

Old Snollygoster, after having got through with his ablutions, was lazily watching us from the rail of the ship. He was probably as able a swimmer as ever lived. He never assumed us with undue suspicions and with no regard to sharks, warning us not to go too far from the ship, and solemnly averring that his assistance need not be counted on, in event we were attacked. Several of us had swum to a distance of some distance from the vessel, when suddenly some one sang out:

"Sharks! sharks!"

I thought it was a joke at first, but upon turning and casting a look seaward, I, sure enough, discovered several of the ominous black fins cutting the water.

I gave the alarm and strook out for the ship, with the strength of forlorn hope, followed by all the rest. To experience the horrible sensations of such a situation is an event which no after events, however stirring, can ever obliterate. It is a horrible experience, and I can scarcely figure out how you expect to be the next of the ravenous jaws in your rear, and the next to feel them on your limbs. I think I never in my life swam so swiftly as upon that occasion.

The ship was not distant—only a few rods, but it seemed a league to our excited imaginations. At length, however, with a wild cry of relief, I felt the canvas of the outstretched sail under me, and, clambering quickly up the side, was safe on the bulwarks. My comrades followed right at my heels, and the next moment I had the satisfaction of seeing them stand by my side.

All of them, No, not all. A feeble cry behind apprised us that one was less fortunate than the rest. It was Dicky Drake. He had succeeded in almost reaching the sail, and was now all but surrounded by the infernal, swiftly-moving fins of the shark monsters, who were actually pushing him about with their snouts. He evidently thought that they had a sure thing, and might as well have a little sport with their morsel before devouring it. The poor fellow floated on the waves, paralyzed with horror and despair, and his hands or feet had no chance of salvation. It is very probable that his circumstance helped to save his life.

We were all so horrified at the spectacle that we were powerless to render any assistance, even if it were possible.

"Amst, the lubbers!" said a clear, rough voice behind us.

Upon looking back we saw that it was the giant negro, Snollygoster, who spoke. Unbeknown to us, he had stripped himself, and now stood naked, with a long clasp-knife, open, and, with a wild yell, he sprang forward in the shallow of the sail below, and, with another grasp, poor Dicky Drake by the hair of the head and drew him in, and we let down a rope and had the satisfaction of drawing the poor devil, more dead than alive, to the deck.

But the shark did not end here. Right in the midst of the shark's spring the larvae

Snollygoster. He dove out of sight. In an instant the water became suffused with blood.

"By Jove! they've nabbed him!" exclaimed old Bludfish, excitedly.

But they hadn't done anything of the kind. The next instant the woolly head of the negro made its appearance above the surface. It was stark, the water became suffused with blood, and the darky disappeared, and the water grew redder and redder, as another of the monsters dived, belly up, with a terrific gasp in his paunch. The negro seemed to be as much at home in the sea as the fish themselves. It was a terrific combat, but one of great interest. In vain would the monsters roll over on their backs and snap at their inexorable foe, or attempt to cut him in two with a sweep of their tremendous flukes. He was away again as quick as he came, attacking them from under the surface. In this he had an advantage, as the water was so bloody that the fish could not see the blows by which they were being momentarily stricken to death, by the terrible right arm of heroic negro. At length, five of them were floating, dead or dying, on the surface, and the rest, of them, with one exception, beat a retreat, and did not venture within several rods. But the grand combat was yet to come. The one shark that lingered was by far the biggest of the group. I think he was, without doubt, the largest shark I ever saw. He was a magnificent specimen to choose from. He was thirty-five feet in length, if an inch, and when he opened his jaws the cavity within was a terrible affair, with its double rows of tusks.

He seemed determined to take upon himself the chief part of the combat, and advanced warily upon the negro, who did not flinch for a single instant. At length and as quick as lightning the monster leaped entirely clear of the sea and brought around his tail like the sweep of a scythe. The darky was out of reach just in time. As it was, the rugged edge of the animal's fluke just grazed his temple, drawing the blood. But before the unwieldy monster could recover himself for a renewal of the attack the knife of the negro was buried in his side. The wound was not mortal, but it must have been a painful one. Indeed, by the way the brute lashed the sea in his fury. It, however, served to render him more wary than before. He now began to swim round and round his toe in the hope of wearying him. But the negro took him right upright in the water, treading him to the bottom, and ever keeping his face to the shark.

At length the latter, losing patience, charged, hoping to tear down Snolly with his snout. But quick as a wink, just as the animal was upon him, the monster disappeared, and the next instant blood was streaming from the side of the ship, lashing the sea feebly with his tail, but fast expiring. Snolly slowly came out of the water and up the ship's side.

The captain, who had witnessed the last combat, shook his head sadly by the hand when he reached the deck, while the crew gathered around him with rousing cheers. Little Dicky Drake caught him by the hand and fairly sobbed. I must say that I had a strong impulse to catch the great negro in my arms and hug him for very joy.

But the simple remarks of the negro replaced his clothes with the simple remarks of the negro.

"Dis nigger never seed dis fish be afeard of." You may think that this is quite sufficient for one fish story, but it isn't. We weren't done with the sharks yet. The blood on the deck of the water the school of sharks again clustered about the ship, and the captain determined to afford the men greater sport by catching one, if possible.

"Ow will you do it?" exclaimed our prisoner.

"Ow will you look one when you haven't any worms to bait with?"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the captain. "It's true we haven't any fishing worms, nor grasshoppers, for that matter. But you I have been complaining of the requisites all day, my dear sir, and my only way to the fish is to bait with worms. Well, try 'em first with a little bacon. So Plick, just order some one to fetch up the carcass of that pig that died last night."

The bait was duly brought up on deck, much to the astonishment of the fisher.

In a trice the captain and Trybrace proceeded to rig up the necessary tackle. Up on the end of

a rope about an inch and a half in thickness he fastened a large boat-hook. We then along the rope through a block and made the latter fast to the fibrous. We thus had a first-rate purchase wherewith to fetch up anything short of a few tons' weight. Having made all ready, we hooked on the bait, and with a dozen stout seamen holding on to the other end, to be ready for any emergency, we lowered her slowly down. The bulk of the entire meet had already taken the sharks wild for first bite, but as we wanted to take our choice and capture one of fair size, whenever a little fellow would jump at the bait we would quickly haul up and let his jaws gnash together with nothing between them.

At last, however, one rousing fellow, who had evidently scented the battle from afar, came rushing up at railroad speed, pushing his voracious way through his smaller fellows. The bait was suspended fully six feet from the surface of the sea, but with a flying leap he took the whole hog at a swallow, and was hooked, of course. His weight drew the line down into the sea with a tremendous splash, almost jerking one or two of us overboard. But the next instant we were ready for him, and began to pull with a will and a "yo-heave-ho!"

The old fellow didn't like it, but come he must, and, in spite of himself, he began to rise clear of the water. He then endeavored to bite off the rope, but Tony had been too sharp for him there, by twining the line, for three or four feet, with a line with such sharp teeth of the monster gritted but harmlessly against the tough rope by which he was held.

Slavily but surely we drew him up until we got him taut up against the tackle-block, when another squad of sailors threw out some grapnel and haul with a will, and in a few minutes other men stood by, armed with cutlasses, hatchets and boarding-pikes.

"Now, be ready to pull him in when I give the word," sang out the captain, who was dancing about, the merriest man on the ship. "And be sure you keep out of the reach of his flukes, or your mothers will forget you before they see you."

"Eave 'im him! eave 'im him!" cried Adolphus de Courcy, who was impatient to try the efficacy of a sword-cane, which he held in his hand.

"Now, lads, haul away!" ordered the captain.

Slowly we brought him in, lowering him by the lead as the other squad dragged in the tail. When the monster was fast to the derrick, when at a signal from the captain, the men at the tail released the grip of their grapnels, while we simultaneously cut the line at his head. You had better believe we sprung out of reach lively, as soon as we had done this. And with reason; for the shark began to flounder in the most terrific rate, and if any one had happened within the reach of his flukes, he would have been a goner.

One laughable incident occurred.

The cockney was either not spry enough in getting out of the way, or he was too intent to get in a shy with his sword-cane; at any rate he caught a side wipe from the flat of one of the flukes, which sent him head over heels into the bow-scupper.

"Now, lads, did that happen?" exclaimed the poor fellow, picking himself up, amid a storm of applause. "You see, I just wanted to get von vipe at the willins with my walliant blade, when down I goes without knowing 'ere I was hit."

It was astonishing how high a shark can leap from the water, but to see one of them bounce up when he has got solid oak beneath him as a purchase, is worth a long voyage. This shark would leap up perpendicularly fully thirty feet in the air, and come down with a crash that would make the sea seem to be a solid block of blood poured from his mouth from the severe contusions he had received, but he seemed to lose nothing of vitality; until, at length, when we had enjoyed his gymnastics sufficiently, the captain made a sign to commence the assault.

For the first time the shark lost his natural energy, and never missed a chance to slay or maim him. So, as soon as the signal was received, we all began to dance about our victim, to get in a blow, which was anything but an easy matter, and, at the same time, avoid the sweep of his flukes, or the snap of his awful jaws.

"First blood!" yelled the cockney, with enthusiasm, as he succeeded in inflicting a slight scratch from which a few drops of blood oozed out.

"Do yer call that blood?" exclaimed old Blue-whisker contemptuously, as he danced in and fetch-

ed the shark a deep gash with his tomahawk, and this time the fountain of life began to flow in earnest.

Thus the captain got in a blow, with his cutlass, between the eyes, and almost at the same time I ran my sharp pike clear through the black fin on the shark's back.

The struggles grew sensibly more feeble as the wounds told upon him, until at length the shark lay almost motionless. You may be sure that all hands, even down to Dicky Drake, were as brave as lions when injuries could be inflicted without danger to themselves.

Everybody now rushed, and a general thrusting, slashing and hacking took place until there was but a few left of the shark but a bloody and shapeless mass.

Every one then fell off exhausted, except Adolphus de Courcy, who enjoyed the fun so much that he couldn't be prevailed upon to stop.

"Just let me 'ave von more vipe at the willin!" he exclaimed, stabbing the lifeless mass again and again, until forced at last to desist by the laughter which his ferocity called forth.

Well, the fun was all over, and the next thing was to have the shark hauled up, and to wash the decks, the last of which was performed in a vein somewhat less merry than before. But the captain made quite a holiday of it, gave us plenty of grog, and there was a little grumbling on board the Queer Fish that if you would be likely to fall in with in a year's voyage.

CHAPTER VI.

CROSSING THE LINE.

The greatest holiday at sea is that of crossing the Equator. It is the fun of the voyage, and to those who have the process in prospect it is a cause of sleepless nights and considerable mental anguish.

The time drew rapidly on for the celebration of this holiday on board the Queer Fish. We were busy making preparations for it, a long time beforehand. Almost every one was in excellent humor. Our cruise had, thus far, been eminently successful. We had captured upward of twelve vessels since our departure from Boston—a period of not more than two months. The coast-guard, therefore, who should bring the cruise to a successful conclusion, we would each and all have something snug laid up at home, with ease and comfort the balance of our lives. So we were in a most excellent frame of mind for an annual festivity.

Stop! There were a few exceptions. If any of you had been on the Queer Fish for a day or two prior to the passage of the equinox, you would have noticed, I think, a certain fidgetiness in the manner of both Dicky Drake and Mr. Adolphus de Courcy, in the several times the general cheerfulness of every one else. The latter of these individuals, it is true, would pretend to be exceedingly careless and free-and-easy. He would be heard to hum the scraps of a great many little melodies and to whistle scraps of a great many more, but you would notice, upon close observation, that it was all put on, and that he was in reality faint at heart.

Poor Dicky Drake hadn't the duplicity necessary for any such make-believe as this. He betrayed a considerable mistake from the very moment that it became known that the equinox was to be passed, and continued to grow worse from day to day, until the despondency of the poor lad was positively pitiful, and I secretly promised myself to inter my influence to tender his share of the initiation light as possible.

There had existed some controversy as to whether Roddy Prim and his little chum, Willie Warner, were not also "liable." But they had succeeded in proving to the satisfaction of Captain Adolphus de Courcy, that the several times from Rio to the Bermudas, and it had eventually been decided that they were exempt.

There were several others of the crew, who were prospective victims. But they were genuine sailors, who really took the thing philosophically. One of these was a Irishman, whose name of Teddy Tight, swore that he longed for the day to arrive, and that he didn't sleep "aisy for thinking of the fun in store for him.

The preparations we had been and were making, were somewhat extensive. Everything was done beforehand, and the several men-of-war. Old Nick was to represent Neptune, and, from the description I have given of him, you may judge that he suited the character to a T. Bluefish was chosen for Amphitrite, the half-brother of the Ruler of the Waves, and, though he had a ladylike habit of hitching up his skirts when he danced, he was a first-class knife-

it was thought that he would go off very creditably. I was one of the Tritons, whose principal duty, on the occasion, was to assist at the initiation of neophytes, while Tony Trybrace, Roddy Prim and Willie Warner were among the Nereids, who sung the mystic songs of the ceremony. I can't vouch for the poetic merit of these musical attempts. One of them was:

"We come from the depths of the ocean
To dance and sing and frolic and play;
And the waves, with what our commotion,
Keep time with what we sing.

"Huzza for the flag of the Union,
The Stars and the Stripes of the free
Our flag is the flag of the ocean,
Down at the bottom of the free!"

I cannot say who was the author of these stanzas, but am compelled to admit that I should keep exceedingly dark on the subject, if I were the author.

Another fragment (even though that I already quoted) ran:

"Father Neptune, he is jolly,
Drink, lads, drink away!
Father Nep, he's a good fellow,
Joy reigns at the bottom of the sea."

"Drink, lads, drink, for Union,
The old flag must live away,
Father Nep, hater communion,
Down at the bottom of the sea."

I reckon the author of these must have been an Irishman; at any rate, no one can question him as a poet.

Well, the day at length arrived. According to rules, the novices were kept in strict confinement, till the performance was ready to commence. The little captain stood looking on impatiently waiting for the opening ceremonies.

At eight bells, all was ready. Neptune was in his throne, with a beard as blue as the sea, and with a great crown of shells and sea-weed strung round his brows. He had a conch-shell for a breast-plate, and each of his shoes, or, rather, slippers, were surmounted with a large, brilliant-hued bivalve.

Amphitrite sat by his side, with her flowing locks—constructed of oaken—sprangled with many varieties of weeds and shells and her long braid (think of a sea queen with a braid!) daintily braided and plaited into grotesque ringlets, while her long, blue paper-muslin robe was intended to have a resemblance to the sea she ruled. The Nereids were grouped around, looking on with interest, and each of them (I say, I saw), with their long hair, and sea-green garments; while we merry Tritons were rigged in a little more convenient costume, as our work was to be heavy; but, rely on it, we looked hideous enough.

As the ship's bells struck eight, three of us, at a signal from the Ruler of the Waves, dove down below, and appeared, a moment afterward, with Dicky Drake, our first victim.

The poor fellow was almost scared to death. He eyed the various contrivances, which had been prepared for his benefit, and shuddered from his cap to his boots.

"Bring forth the culprit!" roared Father Neptune, in a voice of thunder; and we led the trembling victim before the throne.

"What is his crime?" was the lofty question of the Ruler of the Waves.

"I ain't done nothin', yer Honor," began Dicky, thinking he might get off by an eloquent appeal. "Yer see, I was brought up in Salem, I was—a place as has furnished a great many sailors for the line, and I sent out a letter I never cared the line, yer know, but yer see, I was almost did it out. It all as happened in this 'ere way. Ole Sil Jinkins and I, we started out on a mackerel fishin' au' got driv' away down south, almost onto the equator, when a 'owest' nigger, who was a first-class back a jock-king. Well, I was a better ter se—"

"Peace!" roared Neptune in a voice of thunder.

"Yes, your Majesty, but yer see—"

"Peace!"

"Oh, that! Wery good! but, as I was about ter say, the—"

"Peace, or I'll kick yer inter Davy Jones's locker!" was the dignified interruption, and Dicky stopped short.

"Lead the prisoner to the plank!" was the final order of the Ruler of the Waves.

"Visions of 'all walking the plank'" immediately rose up before the wretched youth, and he began to appeal in heartrending accents.

"But I didn't do an' do nothin', yer know. I was allers a goodly, respectful, and a perfect One, an' the time I used a feller slip inter the sea, an' I remonstrated with indignation, be-

cause I thought yer Honor might be averse to tobacco. Yer see—

"Lord him to the plank and shave him!" roared the implacable sea-god, and we led him away.

A great tank of water was situated right in front of the throne, and between the fore and mainmasts of the ship. Over this was drawn a light sail of canvas. At such times, as might be well mention now as any time, was filled with salt water.

Upon this plank we seated our victim, and began to lather him with soft-soap, without paying any regard to his sight. He gave a wild squint at the soap went into his eyes (but he had fair warning from me to keep them shut). Then, as my comrade held him fast, I proceeded to scrape his face with the piece of an iron hoop, which I had picked up and somewhat sharpened for the purpose. I laid it on as lightly as I could, but, nevertheless, the performance was so ridiculously painful that the poor fellow yelled again with agony. For the sharp but gritty edge of the saw-like razor would grab the few hairs he had on the chin, and would pull out the roots.

At length the barbering performance was over, and poor Dicky thought that he had got through the whole passage of the quinox.

But, no sooner was he shaved than the plank was suddenly jerked from under him, and down he came into the cold sea-water, where he floundered about for fully a dozen seconds before he could scramble up.

He was next submitted to the tumbling apparatus. This was nothing more nor less than the mizen-royal in the hands of a dozen men, or three grating gaffs, corner, while the victim was tossed into the middle of it. He was flung up and down, now and then letting him down far enough to give him a good bump against the deck. We finished him up with a keel-haul. There are two ways of doing this. The old way consisted in making the victim fast by either ankle, and then flinging him overboard at the bow, dragging him under the keel, with a rope on either side of the ship. But this was never resorted to as pastime; in fact, it was considered the worst of nautical punishments. The victim was fastened to the keel by the feet. If anything of that kind had been tried over the Quier Fish, the sufferer would most certainly have had a hard time of it. For our bottom was completely covered with that small variety of the carbuncle shell-fish, known to sailors as the shipworm, and which, when dragged against them, would have been terribly lacerated.

But, of course, nothing of that kind was to be attempted upon such a merry and good-humored craft as the Quier Fish. Our keel-hauling simply consisted in making the victim fast by his ankles, and shooting him out far behind in the wake of the vessel (always making sure that there were no sharks in the neighborhood), and whisking him back again before he could well know how wet he was.

Poor Dicky Dred and stood everything else like a man, but his soul instinctively revolted from keel-hauling—though, to tell the truth, it was by far the easiest punishment inflicted in our category.

He made fast to his ankles, and swung him over the side in spite of his entreaties. The ship was going at a spanking pace—a good eight knots an hour—as Dicky touched the water at her foaming wake. We let out lively on the lines, and away he sped, a good fifteen fathoms from the ship. He squealed like a stuck pig as he went to the water, but we brought him back so quick that his head awoke.

We then led him up to the throne of Father Neptune, who stretched his withered hands over his head, blessed him, and proclaimed him a member of the crew by his last baptism therein. The victim was a good fellow, to dress himself, was given a rousing glass of grog, and in a few moments felt as merry as a king, quite anxious to laugh at the next victim. They followed, one after another, amid roars of laughter. Most of them were old tars, who took the thing as an excellent joke, and we therefore made little out of them.

At last there were only two victims left. These were Teddy Tight and Mr. Adolphus de Courcy. The latter was reserved as the last, because he expected to be the first man on top of him; and the former was kept as an extra, because we half suspected that his eager anticipation of the fun that was in store for him was all gammon, and merely put on to cloak his terror.

In fact, it was the testimony of each of his predecessors in the "ceremonies" that, as his

turn came nearer and nearer, Teddy's courage began to sink until, at last, it was at zero. When we led the doughy little Irishman on deck, he was as pale as a ghost, and shook like a leaf.

On being led before the august presence of Father Neptune, however, his native blarney began to overflow, and excuse after excuse began to be poured out in a profusion which would have been limitless, if he had not cut him short.

"Och, yer Honor!" he cried, "w'at has yer Honor got ag'in' such a poor little spalpeen as myself? Sure, an' hav'n't I served yer Honor w'ith my hand and body? Let me off this time, and I'll serve yer Honor then, yer Och, yer Honor, ye must surely remember me. Och, yer Honor, he would kick an' knock the top-lights out of a murderin' spalpeen who was after injurin' yer Honor's reputation. An' there was my sister—God rest her soul—ye should 'a' seen."

"Silence!" was the gruff reply of the ruler of the waves; and Teddy, though he kicked and squirmed like an ugly worm on a bodkin, was put through the necessary course of sprouts in short order, but with a will.

Adolphus de Courcy was led up amid peals of laughter. He had had the philosophy to strip himself, with the exception of a pair of old pantaloons, and now appeared on deck with an air of offended dignity, which made him ridiculous in his present attire.

"What is yer crime?" was the gruff question of Neptune.

Adolphus eyed the venerable figure of the ruler of the waves with a lofty air of scorn, and did not, at first, deign to reply.

"Yer crime!" bawled the king, seizing his scepter with a menacing gesture.

"May hit please yer hill-favored 'lignness, has I ha'n't got anything of that kind about my person, I ha'n't hable to produce hany."

"You!" accused of striving to usurp our throne, exclaimed old Neptune, wrathfully.

"Well, yer Honor, I do as a cockney, with his breath almost taken away by the novelty of the charge. 'I—' I usurp yer throne! My dear bold fellow, I wouldn't 'ave it for ha gity."

"Ha! do yer hesit us!" Executioners, do your duty!" roared the indignant monarch.

"Now, 'old him, executioners," argued the cockney, remonstrating, "let me warn ye not to go han' do hanythin' so very rash. Do ye 'appen to know 'o I hant?"

"Ye 'appen to 'ave the grandson of 'e Lord knows Who," said Father Nep.

"Bless me, now, and 'ow did ye know that my grandfather was a lord? That's very astonishing, I declare. Very well, you see I'm considerably different from almost all of ye fellows, himeasmuch as I was brought up a gentleman, and hant been torn him down him land, the Hemptress of the Hocene. Now, certainly, yer Hexcellency won't be so unfortunately rash has to offend the Hemptress of the Hocene by hany humde interference with one of her subjects, while him the pursuit of 'is peaceful avocation."

The Britisher argued this in his most solemn and impressive style, and looked, when he was through, as if he thought the argument to be conclusive. But he roused a new enemy in an unexpected quarter. Scarcely had he finished his harangue, before Amphitrite (w'dc Bluefish) sprung from her throne, with a wild yell, and caught him by the hair.

"Who dares to style any other than me the hemptress of the briny deep?" she shrieked in his face, and then, with her octopus arms, she seized of thine own mouth, Usurper, thy time's come! Tritons, do your work!"

"But I protest! I demand ha hinstantaneous release has a Hinglishman on the 'igh seas! Captain, I appeal to you! This outrage to Hinglishdom will be hawfully hanged! I protest!"

But he was now on the plank, undergoing the operation of shaving, and his open mouth received the great brush of lather full between his teeth, almost choking him, and completely stopping his protest. True enough, then, the plank was whipped from under him, and down he went with an awful splash into the tub, protesting amid the shouts of laughter, something about his being "a chosen son of bold Hing-land."

We tossed him in the sail with the jollies. e-

hence, but when the ropes were being adjusted for the final part of the programme, that of keel-hauling, he begged off piteously.

"Captain, I shall die, I shall die!" he pleaded, turning with an imploring gesture, to Captain Joker, who was enjoying the thing amazingly. "Captain, I 'ave a natural hantipathy to hanythin' but 'ot water. A bath him my greatest source of perspiration will be the only way to save my life. I know hit well. Now, please, captain, for the sake of 'our bold and harden friendship—for the sake—"

But the captain was implacable, and the cockney, though struggling violently, was sinking under the weight of the water, and melting away. The day was hot enough, and you may judge by the latitude we were in, and the course of sprouts through which we had been rushing our English victim, had made the sweat come from every pore of his skin.

The audience, therefore, as his body hit the coolness of the rushing ocean stream, must have been very great. As it was, he gave an awful scream, and floundered like a stranded shark. Away he went, far out from the stern in the swift wake of the gliding ship. When we drew in the plank, it was his head and arms, and once more on deck, he was so overjoyed at his rescue, that he pret-ended to have liked his bath.

"Do you know, I enjoyed hit himmensely," he exclaimed.

And when he was dressed, with a good, stiff brush, in his hair, he really was one of the merriest men on the ship.

Well, that ended the ceremonies, but the holiday was not over by any means. We had an extraordinary dinner, and, after the sun had set and the bright tropic moon had risen, Snollygrog brovict over his victuals, and we had a glorious dance. Grog was freely distributed, and I am afraid there were a good many heads that felt abnormally large next morning.

CHAPTER VII. FUN ON SHORE.

In the latter part of the month of July, we succeeded in making a safe entrance into the neutral port of Rio de Janeiro, after having captured several more valuable prizes, and bringing two or three along with us. The first of these prizes was the Albatross, in this port, when we entered. She could have blown us out of water by one broadside of her great guns, but, nevertheless, she respected the neutrality of the port, and did not dare to molest us.

It may seem strange, from the manner in which Adolphus de Courcy had been treated on board the Quier Fish, that he should regret leaving us. But it is, nevertheless, a fact. When his freedom was given him, he assembled the senior officers of the British ship before him for the jolly time they had afforded him, and shook the captain warmly by the hand. He was really an excellent-hearted fellow, and we gave him three hearty cheers as he went over the ship's side to the boat which was to convey him and his luggage to the British ship before mentioned. And his sincerity was one of a transient kind; for we afterward learned that he spoke well of us to the officers of the Albatross.

Going on shore, after a long voyage, is the sailor's paradise. I reckon some of those old tars, who have been in the service of the law, appeared; for a noisier, wilder, more devil-may-care set of tars never raised a rumpus in a seaport town than did we in Rio. We were allowed to go on shore in squads alternately; and as many of the British sailors were also, more or less, in the town, the whole was a scene of a very serious character, though the disturbances were usually speedily quelled by the authorities.

The first disturbance of this kind that I was in happened a few days after we entered the port. A party of our tars, who had been on shore, but Tny Trybrace and I had somehow got separated from our companions. We were both of us somewhat in liquor, and had a hankering—a usual one under the circumstances—to have something more to drink. So we entered a gin-sort and a gin-shop, and, not understanding the lingo very fluently, proceeded to help ourselves—of course with the intention of paying our way.

In the course of this proceeding, Tony was rudely thrust back from the counter by the proprietor of the place, a wiry Englishman, and at the same time, admonished by a torrent of invectives in the unknown lingo.

It is poor policy to treat a drunken man rudely, unless you are a policeman. A sailor, especially, will bear but little handling. Tony staggered back a moment, but, the next, the

Brazilian was lying on the floor from a terrific blow between the eyes. Just at that moment, several English sailors entered the room, and, seeing that we were Americans, of course took the landlord's part. The latter was but little hurt and soon got up, muttering a great string of oaths, the usual consolation of the Spaniard, and, at last, time, and a much longer way, and taking care to be out of the reach of Tony's powerful fist.

"His 'ha' awful mean shame for to see ha poor cuss treated him that 'ere way," mused one of the Englishmen to his comrades, in a tone so low that it was evidently meant for our special benefit.

"That's so! Shiver my timbers ef I would stand it ef I was the Spanish cuss," was the elegant rejoinder.

"Whoever don't like it, can take it up whenever he wants," blithely interposed a sailor.

"His that 'ere mark histended for me?" asked the first speaker.

"Well, it is," said Tony, "and so is this 'ere." And before I could guess his intention, or move an inch to hinder it, down went the cockle-shell on the head of the old Yankee sailor. The rest of the Britishers immediately sprang forward to avenge their comrade's fall; and, as I couldn't stand by and see little Tony overpowered, I also went in. There were ten of them, at least, and we were soon on the verge of a hot action, when a crowd of half-breed and ears of friends outside, and in dashed Old Nick and Blackie, at the head of a dozen or more of our lads, when the way that the Britishers and that entire gin-shop was cleaned out was a caution. Three policemen now dropped in, but Blackie and I were not a moment's way as the rest of them, and made our escape up the street.

This may be a rude picture, but it is one of truth, and I merely give it as a sample of sailors' life ashore in foreign parts.

But there were other scenes in our Brazilian experience that were much more novel and satisfactory than the foregoing. The town itself—or, rather, city; for it is a large place—is full of interest to the foreigner.

The men are mostly very homely, the women very pretty. But the latter make a great display in a worldly way. I have seen six elegant "turn-outs" here, as in other parts of the globe. The ladies—some of them—are attired with unparalleled magnificence. You know it is a country of diamonds. The ladies sport a quantity of the costly stones, have other ornaments, which, perhaps, will be new to most of you. This is a peculiar kind of firefly which the ladies wear in their hair. I have seen them fastened among the black locks of a Brazilian belle at night-time, when the effect was striking in the extreme.

Gambling is very prevalent among the people.

Even the lowest classes are infatuated with their favorite game of *monte*. They play the clothes off their backs, and would play the hair off their heads, if they were wise. They are great lovers of spin food, like all the rest of the South Americans, as well as the Mexicans. The amount of red peppers which a genuine Spanish-American will consume at one sitting would make a Yankee sneeze for the balance of his lifetime. They sew it and fry it and broil it, and eat it as we would eat.

When I was in Mexico, the body of a Mexican, who had died of exposure, remained all night exposed on the mountains, where the wolves are as thick as grasshoppers, and we found the body next morning untouched. I never believe in the wolves' excessively peevishness that the wolves couldn't find palate or stomach for him.

Another favorite article of food is the inevitable *tortilla*. This is almost identical with what our hunters and soldiers call flapjacks. It is a kind of pancake, of a round form, and goes very well on a hungry stomach.

There are also many lamentable things to witness in Brazil. The condition of the slaves is wretched in the extreme. Never—except, perhaps, it was in the Isle of France—did I witness a more pitiful sight than that of the negroes groaning gallingly at Rio; and I was told that the condition of the slaves further up the country—especially in the diamond districts—was even more deplorable.

But my intention is to devote myself mainly to what we do, so we will quit this distressing subject for a livelier theme.

One of the greatest attractions which Rio afforded us was the inevitable bull-fight. Great preparations had been making for one of these performances before we arrived. Of course, as soon as we got wind of it on board the *Queer*

Fish, every man was wild to see the show. The little captain wished to engage us all; but, as all were not so, it was decided who should, by lots. It was my fortune to be one of the lucky ones.

So, on an exceedingly bright morning in the month of July, we—about twenty of us—landed at Rio to see the fight. The affair was to take place at a distance of seven miles from the city, and we had taken the precaution, several days beforehand, of securing conveyances. These were nothing to boast of. They consisted of one barouche, an old-fashioned transportation wagon, and a light, rickety affair, with shafts nine or fifteen feet long, which is very frequent use in Spanish countries (*vide flavano*).

We made some very faces at seeing these turn-outs, but the horses attached to them looked spry, and we were resolved to make the best of the bargain. We were soon seated, or, rather, *heaped* up, upon the sorry vehicles, the drivers cracked their long whips, and away we went through the narrow streets of Rio, singing songs, yelling discordantly, and getting outside of a large amount of bad alcohol.

At length we reached the plains back of the city, the ramparts—the broad, glorious, rolling pampas; and we could see the inclosure where the bull-fight was to take place, together with the flag-decorated, red-roofed buildings surrounding it. A vast concourse had preceded us, and we found the place very much crowded, and had difficulty in reaching our place. These Brazilians in our immediate vicinity must have remembered for a long time the crowd of Yankee privateersmen. These Spanish people have ways and manners very singular to a foreigner. While we were waiting for the signal, the ladies amused themselves with smoking their universal cigarettes and fanning themselves. They never stop smoking, save, perhaps, to make and light a new cigar, and it has often been a matter of reflection to me, how they could keep up that everlasting fanning of their pretty faces. They never stop. The ladies are very unsanitary. They must be very powerful in the right arm. I am sure it would make me, or any other strong man, very tired to swing one of those fans for half an hour, yet these pretty ladies keep it up until the end of the fight.

While waiting for the bulls, the men either talk to the ladies or play *monte* among themselves. They frequently quarrel during their games, talk very boisterously, lay their hands on their knives, and look very savage. But gamblers quarrel among them very seldom go any further.

We had plenty of time to observe all these things, as we were fully half an hour before the time, as was almost everybody else. We spent a portion of our time in eating Brazilian nuts, oranges, bananas, and such fruit, and in smoking their cherer or two for the *Q. D.* Fish and the flag that flew at her peak. The native policemen would lob up and down about us, endeavoring to maintain better order, but not liking to arrest any individual one of us, while they did not dare to attempt a whole arrest. All this weary interval of waiting an American caterer would have filled up with strains of music; but not until almost at the moment of the commencement of the performance, did the Brazilian musicians (wretched ones) discourse their strains.

At last, however, the band pealed out, and the performers came running into the ring. The fighters of the bull, on this occasion, were of two classes. One class consisted of men, dressed in tight and spangles, after the manner of our circus actors, and the other of men, dressed in plain, with to bind the least, while each of them carried a number of little darts at his belt. The darts were sort of fireworks, one of the various modes adopted for the return and goading of the bulls. The other class consisted of the *matadores*, and were dressed in the ordinary nature than their brothers of the arena. Most of them on this occasion were mounted, and armed with spears, but the most famous were on foot, armed simply with a long, spearhead rapier. These latter are in a bull-fight, and are the only ones who are theatrical performers are in America and England. They become very famous when successful, and star it through the country in the same way as our actors. The main office of the star *matadores* is to give the finishing blow to the bull, the chief of the accomplish being in the art of killing at a single, graceful thrust of the sword.

When the performers had taken their positions, a signal from the major domo caused the opening of a suspicious-looking door at the upper end of the arena, and out bounded an enormous

black bull, with a bellowing noise, and lashing his sides furiously with his tail. His face was now commenced in earnest.

The bull was opened by one of the horsemen crouching his spear and rushing in to the attack. But, quick as a wink, and as lively as a cat, the bull leaped on one side, avoided the thrust, and ripped up the *matadores* decorated bullfight. The instant the bull-leaplight was hurried high in the air, and fell to the ground. I looked to see him destroyed instantly. But now the flag-bearers rushed in, flinging their red scarfs over the animal's horns, and engaging his attention until their discarded comrade recovered, and was enabled to lift out of the ring. The other horsemen, three in number, now spurred forward, and succeeded in inflicting several painful wounds.

Infuriated with agony, the bull rushed at them wildly, the way that; but they glided away from him, and inflicted new wounds.

At last the flagmen (I forget what the Spanish name for them is) rushed in and flung their little darts into the animal's side. The torch was applied to the signal of the coup de grace, and the bull was transformed into an enormous fiery porcupine, and a very frightful-looking figure he cut. Although considerably enfeebled by loss of blood, the ungovernable fury of the bull sustained him for another assault, when he fought with the *matadores* for a few minutes at the top of the pavilion. But now the master of ceremonies gave the signal, and one of the metestrian *matadores* stepped out, sword in hand.

There were three of these men. They had remained standing motionless in a very nonchalant way, waiting for the signal of the coup de grace. The one who now stepped out to the task, was a little, handsome fellow. With a light bound, he sprang at the side of the bull, avoided the side-sweep of his angry horn, and plunged his weapon in the animal's neck.

A roar of brass burst from the audience, for the blow was not the death-blow; and the *matadores* recovered his sword and returned to his former position; for one of the rules of the bull-fight is that the blow which is intended to be final must not be repeated, if it be unsuccessful.

And now, at another signal from the major domo, an old *matadore*, who had stood guardly in front of us throughout the entire performance, now advanced easily toward the bull, who made a staggering charge upon him. But he easily avoided the charge, gained the animal's side, and drove in his sword to the hilt, right behind the shoulder-blade. This time it was the *coup de grace*. The bull stumbled forward, and then fell to the ground dead, while a thundering cheer greeted the successful *matadore*, who bowed so recklessly, as he snatched it, wiped his sword, and quietly resumed his former position.

Now the supernumeraries entered the ring, with a wagon, to remove the dead bull and horses and other debris.

Several other horses more or less formidable, were disposed of in rapid succession.

But the greatest bull was reserved for the finale. A hum went through the audience as he sprang into the arena. I think I never saw a nobler animal than this bull. He was of a light gray, and as glossy as the finest steed. His eyes were brilliant and large. The strength as displayed in the splendid hurls and glorious neck was prodigious. All "our crowd" sent up a rousing cheer as soon as this animal made his appearance.

With the usual performance was gone through with by the bull. The horsemen charged; one of the horses was killed; the flag-bearers charged, and one of them was killed. The fireworks had become exhausted; so that part of the show—a very disgusting part to me, I must confess—had to be abandoned. The master of ceremonies seemed loth to give the signal for the death of this noble beast. And while he was deliberating, the bull made a sudden and most effective charge upon all the horsemen and flagmen, who were all hurled to the ground. The result was that two horses were immediately overthrown and disabled, one of the flagmen was immediately killed, and another one badly hurt, while one of the three *matadores*,* who had been in the group, was tossed high into the

* *Matadore* is a name applied generally to men who attack the bull either on horse or foot; but the disjunctive and legitimate meaning of the term applies to the footmen who carry swords, and whose office is especially that of the *coup de grace*.

er, and, by the rules of the arena, was out of the fight, on account of his having left his proper position at the edge of the ring. There were now, literally, as the only remaining fighters, two *matadores* or swordsmen. One of these, at the sign from the master of ceremonies, and, with a new vigor, began to advance upon the attack. But his blow was a bad one. The old *matadore*—the one who had finished up the first bull so nicely, was now the only one left, and he, without losing a particle of his composure, went in with a confident air.

But he made a mistake, just as he reached the animal's side, and he was again repulsed by hitting a horn with his crazy-bone, and away flew his sword out of his hand. The next instant, he was tossed sky-high and Mr. Bull had it all his own way.

A murmur of horror ran through the audience, for it seemed that now, as every one of the fighters was either prostrate or weaponless, there would be a great carnage. Even the hitherto imperturbable *mañ-dono* lost the presence of mind and turned as pale as death. At that momentous juncture, old Bluefish, to our unmitigated astonishment, started up with a wild whoop.

"I'll spike him! I'll spike him! Smash my top-knights, if I don't spike him!" he shouted.

And, before we could guess his intention, he had leaped the railing, and was in the ring. Sustaining up the sword of one of the fallen *matadores*, he made at the bull. The latter charged him, with a roar that shook the pavilion to its center. But the sturdy old sailor leaped on one side, got in his blow, and drove it in behind the shoulder, the weapon passing just inside the skin close to the hilt. The magnificent beast tottered forward an instant, and then dropped to the earth, stone-dead.

Cue after cheer greeted the brave deed of the Yankee tar.

"Bravo! bravo! Americano! Americano!" echoed from the crowd of Brazilians.

"I told yer I'd spike him!" was the simple and only self-compliment of Bluefish, as he returned to our midst.

We were proud enough of him, you may be sure. But we were kinder still, when, as we were going out with the band struck up "Hail Columbia." The master of ceremonies had ordered it as a compliment to us.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROUND THE HORN—THE PATAGONIANS.

A WEEK after our experience on the bull-fight, we were ready for sea. It was an easier matter, however, to be ready for sea, than to be able to get to sea. For several of John Bull's cruisers were watching for us just outside the harbor, determined, if possible, to put a stop to our trip, and deprive our British commerce as far as we were concerned. But, on a stormy night in the early part of August, Captain Joker determined to make an attempt to run the blockade. All the men were quietly posted at quarters, and we were, cautiously hugging the land on the south side of the bay. We got along capitally till we reached the mouth of the harbor. Here we almost ran into a man-of-war. The night was so dark that you couldn't see your hand before your face. We just saw her lantern in time to bring our helm hard-a-port. As was, we grazed her stern with our bowsprit.

"What ship is that?" was immediately bawled from the man-of-war.

"British sloop-of-war Achilles," sung out Captain Joker. "What ship is that?"

"All right!"

We passed on, holding our breaths, and were soon out of reach.

But we were scarcely two miles out to sea, when the signal lantern of another of our blockading ships appeared on the point of land below. But we kept straight on our way without paying the least attention to it. Another shot to lowed us as harmlessly as its predecessor, but a third struck the tail-rail of our stern, sending up a shower of splinters.

"Ten! I bid ye—ay with the Long Tom!" cried our little captain, getting in considerable of a tantrum for such a good natured fellow.

Bang! went the long brass swivel, and a flash from the enemy's guns, immediately afterward, told us our little strike was far and broad in the starboard bow. But she had one more complement of a similar character, and then kept on her way, without further molestation, for we could easily outtail anything the enemy could bring against us.

It was the beginning of a tempest which raged with but little intermission, for several days;

and we were kept hard at work, as a consequence. It let up, however, when we had reached a latitude far down the coast. We here had the satisfaction of capturing two richly-laden brigs from Valparaiso, which more than compensated us for our privations.

It had been decided, at first, to double the Horn, but, as the weather bore far too much more than commonly bad, we entered the Straits of Magellan, intending to gain the Pacific by this avenue. There was more danger attended by this route than by the Horn, as it was quite probable that we should meet some of the vessels of the enemy. In view of this probability, Captain Joker decided to make no captures while in the straits, however tempting an opportunity might offer, in order to disarm suspicion, if we should happen to fall in with a man-of-war.

The Straits of Magellan,—that broad avenue between the southern portion of the South American Continent and Terra del Fuego—links the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by a fine channel, deep enough for the largest ship that floats. It is a wild and dreary scene. On both sides of the straits the character of the land is eminently desolative and inhospitable. The cliffs of black granite rise from the water's edge, in most places, to a great height, sparsely grown with stunted trees and a description of rank grass. The climate is almost always cold and dismal, with something falling all the time—snow, rain, or sleet.

The impression produced upon the mind of the rover, when, for the first time, he views these remote and cheerless scenes, is one that can never be effaced. One of the first queries which he makes to himself is, "How can anything so gloomy and dreary exist in the heart of desolation and gloom?" Yet inhabitants there are, of both species.

It was snowing furiously as we entered the straits, and we had not proceeded far, with the Patagonian coast in view, before we saw an immense flock of ostriches on the shore, looking down at us in a very curious way. Something, however, occurred to frighten them, and away they went, vanishing inland. These South American ostriches are not quite so large as their brothers of tropical Africa; they seem smaller, and their legs are much thicker, and their wings are so small as hardly to appear at all, being concealed under the heavy feathers of the side. They run with great speed, outstripping the swiftest racer. They seem to resemble the cassowaries of Southern Asia and the emus of the wastes of the Sahara, not nearly so valuable as the latter for their plumage.

We also saw some wolves before the day was over. We lay up for the night, under the shelter of the high cliffs of the Terra del Fuego side of the straits. It blew storm during the night, and was so cold that we suffered considerably. The next morning a boat expedition was started, to obtain some wood. I was along, and Tony Trubace was in command. We rowed up an inlet which deeply indented the coast, in order to find, if possible, a landing-place, where wood could be obtained.

The scenery of Terra del Fuego is, if possible, more desolate and cheerless than the opposite side of the straits. It was the very incarnation of gloomy solitudes, as we put up with a narrow inlet, a high rock cliff on either side; and I felt a sense of loneliness and awe creep over me as the ship was shut from our view. The very waters through which we glided appeared black and somber—there was nothing of the glad coast greenness, or of the true sea-blue about it. Now and then a lone eagle would rise from some jagged crag, and soar over us with a hungry scream, which only served to render the solitude more impressive and solemn.

It was up in this inlet that we saw human inhabitants for the first time since entering the straits.

The Indians of Terra del Fuego are nothing like so formidable in size as their brethren of Patagonia. In fact, they are rather below than above the middle line of humanity. They are exceedingly little, and have but a long neck.

"As for their customs," as the midshipman said, "they are incomprehensible; and as for their manners, they haven't got any."

They live in wretched habitations, which are semi-subterranean, and are partially dressed in the skins of wild beasts—mostly of wolves and foxes.

As we rowed up the estuary, quite a number of these savages appeared upon the rocks to our left, and greeted us with friendly gestures. As we, soon after, desired a favorable landing-place, we made for the shore, and, as soon as we

were on it, were surrounded by upward of fifty Indians. We took good care to keep together, with an eye always on our arms, for we did not know what treachery might be preparing for us. But we wronged these savages in our suspicions.

They were of an exceedingly mild disposition, and manifested no other feeling for us than friendship, though the curiosity with which they examined our clothes and arms was rather annoying. They had evidently seen but few white men, as the Straits of Magellan were not frequently visited by vessels in those days. One of the young Indians, with a name, which appeared to be quite a "helle" among her companions, took quite a fancy to me. She examined my hands with wonder, but, upon pushing up my sleeve and viewing the whiteness of my arm, she was much struck at my appearance, and greeted me with a great number of questions in her native lingo, which must surpass the Chinese in incomprehensibility, I think. These people are not devoid of a certain frankness of expression, which commends them to the notice of the stranger. They have a mild, placid look, but, on a single glance, you are struck with the fierceness of their eyes. They are armed with bows and arrows and rude spears, and live to a large extent upon fish and shellfish. The latter are procurable in large numbers, and the former are generally captured by means of the spear, after the manner of the northern tribes of North American Indians. The males and females dress precisely alike—the garment generally consisting of a loose robe of skins, reaching from the neck to the feet—and this, together with a very slight dissimilarity of facial characteristics, renders it difficult to distinguish the two sexes apart. One very praiseworthy quality in these Indians—in strong contradistinction to the savages of North America—is displayed in their almost universal contempt for trinkets. They do not seem to care a button for any ornaments, except the shape of a piece of useful clothing—while any gift which they can put to immediate use is received with exuberant tokens of delight and satisfaction.

One of our men offered to one of the chiefs a large, heavy, button, which was discarded with contempt, and the single comment of "rayway nevel," which, by a free translation, may be rendered into "What is it good for?" "It is pretty, but worthless." Whereas, a large nail which was offered by another of the men, was delightedly accepted, with a profusion of thanks.

There was some utility in this. It might be fashioned into a spear or arrow-head, or crooked for a hook to hang dried fish on. And it was, therefore, far more valuable to the simple natives than the brightest ornament of gold or precious stones.

We gathered our boat full of wood—such as it was—which we cut and collected from the dwarf forests in the vicinity, and in a few hours were ready to take our departure. I do not know where they have ever seen a ship, but, by some intuitive faculty, they seemed to conjecture that we hadn't come all the way from the other side of the world in the long boat—that there must be a vessel of larger proportions somewhere in our vicinity, and they were anxious to communicate with it. Strange to say, these natives are very poor boatmen. They are almost devoid of any water conveyance.

We could not accommodate all of them, so they departed one of their number—quite a lad—to accompany us to our next port of call, as follows, and, packed off, with our load of help, having a much better opinion of the natives than before.

It was worth a long journey to witness the wonder and awe of our little passenger upon first beholding the Queen of the South, and her anchor in the straits. At first the solemnity of the thing kept him silent. His feelings of awe, however, gradually wore off, and he began to clap his hands and utter wild exclamations at everything he saw. When on board of the ship, he danced and sung in perfect ecstasy. We had a good deal of fun with him, and the captain offered him a glass of erg, "just to see," to use the shipper's own language, "how civilized the youngster was." Upon the latter's rejecting the liquor in unutterable disgust, Joker unhesitatingly concluded to be in the lowest depths of primitive barbarism.

The next day, after putting our guest ashore—much to his dissatisfaction—we proceeded westward through the straits. In two days we arrived at the western extremity, without encountering a solitary ship. It was here that I met with quite an adventure.

I was again a member of a boat expedition to procure wood, and as we had seen a good many animals on the rocks, I, together with several others, provided myself with a musket and ammunition, in hopes of procuring something edible in the way of game.

As I loaded our boat, those who had guns—myself among them—started off in different directions through the rocks and woods. For my part, I struck a bee-line inland, through the scrub trees, and had not proceeded more than a mile or so when I sighted a small grayish fox, and I brought him to a standstill with a bullet through his skull. It occurred in a singularly gloomy and dreary sort of dingle or ravine, surrounded by frowning rocks, and I sagged thus, I hastened forward to secure my prey, but just as I was stooping down to pick it up, a deep growl startled me, and upon looking up I perceived a monstrous gray wolf, who was approaching me with a hungry and ferocious aspect. Almost immediately I perceived several more of the same ugly customers approaching from the summit of the ridge. I had neglected to reload my gun, and was somewhat taken aback by this strange apparition. But I have seldom been at a loss for resource in my life, and I immediately picked up the carcass of the little fox, and tossed it at the wolf to attract his attention, at the same time springing to a scrub-oak, which I succeeded in climbing, bringing my gun with me.

As sooner was I safely ensconced in the crotch of the tree, there came a pack of wolves, led by a pack of at least fifty of the gaunt, ferocious beasts, who had gobbled up the little fox in the twinkling of an eye—more or less—and now seemed especially thirsty for my blood. To my great dismay I saw that they were not a mere mob of wolves coming at a brisk trot over the opposite ridge. You see, I was considerably uneasy in my mind, on account of the loneliness of the tree. I straddled the crotch, and my feet swung, at times, six feet from *terra firma*, and there was not much chance of standing on my feet without dropping my gun. I was debating the grave question in my mind as to whether the wolves were spry enough to leap as high as my feet, when the biggest "varmint" of the bunch, then about six feet from me, was subjected by taking a short run and a flying leap at my feet. He missed them by about six inches, and his teeth gnashed together with the most villainous snap. He made several more efforts, and did me no other harm, but as they could not succeed in coming within reach, I felt easier in my mind on this score. The entire pack then surrounded me, gazing up at me wistfully, as at a dainty piece of meat hung beyond their reach, and set up a prolonged, dissonant, howl, that fogged all about my ears. First, I felt the strangeness of my situation, as well as its peril, lay upon my spirit like a spell. Can you imagine anything more ridiculously lonesome and desolate than a Yankee tar treed in the middle of the del Puelo? Next, I thought of the monstrous, gigantic and hungry wolves! I can't, I believe I would as lief climb the North Pole and take a lonely rooster on its summit.

Presently, however, I remembered that I had ammunition, and a large quantity of ammunition; and the idea occurred to me that the wolves were hungry, I had better feed them on each other, as the most charitable course I could pursue.

So, having found a niche in the trunk of the tree just below my right foot, where I could securely rest my gun, I rapidly reloaded. Having done so, I took a steady aim, and knocked over the biggest, ugliest rascal I could see. No sooner did the other wolves see and scent the quivering blood of their comrade, than they rushed upon him with joyful yells and rapidly tore him to pieces—within a few minutes made light work, as well as many hands. As soon as this was disposed of I shot another, which was also soon devoured. So I went on, knocking them down as fast as I could get my rifle to miss my aim. But the voracity of the infernal brutes seemed to have no end, and fresh squads kept coming in from every side, until I was forced to think that it was incumbent upon me to shoot all the rest of the wolf population. I destroyed fifty of them. I did not, and yet they yelped for more, as if they hadn't had a meal in six weeks. Only having about three charges left, I now ceased firing for a while, and, leaning my back against the trunk of the tree in peace. But they had not the remotest idea of doing anything of the kind.

I remained six mortal hours a prisoner in the crotch of that miserable tree. At length, however, as it began to grow dark, I began to be alarmed, and recommenced my firing, in the

hope that it would bring my comrades to the rescue. By the blessing of Providence, they did at last hear me, and I was saved. I shall never forget the thrill of deep joy with which I heard their encouraging cheer, as they advanced to the rescue, over the summit of the eastern ridge. They were not long in coming, and I was armed with a musket, led on in solid column by little Tony Trybrace. A loud shout of laughter burst from their lips upon perceiving the ridiculous position in which I was placed. But their merriment was something that I was little disposed to joke at.

Nevertheless they advanced resolutely forward, pouring destructive volleys into the bewildered wolves, who now began to scatter in every direction. And, in a few moments not a lion of the pack was left to be seen.

I slid down from the tree as lively as possible, and told the story of my adventures; but they had to support me to the boat, as I was so weak from the cramped position I had so long maintained. That I could hardly use my legs at present.

That was the last of my experience in Terra del Fuego. The next morning we sailed northward, skirting the western coast of Patagonia.

The water which we had taken on board at Rio having proved of very inferior quality, the captain decided to make a short run to the Patagonian coast—where the water is very delicious—in order to refill the casks. In several days we arrived at Wellington Island. This is a long, narrow, almost herbless island on the western coast of the Straits of Magellan, and of Chile and the western extremity of the Straits of Magellan. There is quite an archipelago here, there being a continuous line of islands stretching along almost the entire coast. Keeping the northern extremity of the continent on our left, we steered in toward the coast, and soon made an excellent natural harbor on the mainland.

The country here is not nearly so bleak as down at the straits. There is quite a spontaneous growth of low vegetation, such as the cedar; and I was told that there were extensive grassy plains inland. Indeed, there must be something of the kind to feed the large numbers of horses and guanacos (a wool-growing beast, a little smaller than the goat) that are found there, many of which we saw, even on the coast, which is rocky and bold. You can't say much for the climate, even in antithesis to Terra del Fuego. It is simply, universally, equally wretched. It rains all the time, with no cessation at all. At first we were assured that it always rained. They did not know what a dry day was, and laughed heartily when told of countries where the sun frequently deigned to smile for an entire day at a stretch.

To go with him upon an ostrich-bunt in the mainland for nearly a week, and as there were plenty of natives in the vicinity, we had an excellent opportunity of observing them, which we were glad to improve. The coast of this remote region was not visited in those days, except at rare intervals. Some few adventurous navigators had explored the seas and inlets to some extent; but to most of the natives whom we met, we were as strange a race as though we had dropped from the sky.

Not long after we were then, and are to the present day, entertained with regard to the inhabitants of Patagonia. They were represented as of gigantic proportions, herculean strength and ferocious and cannibalistic propensities. Not one of the natives, however, they are a very tall race. I have seen them as high as seven feet. But six feet four inches is not considered dwarfish, even in Patagonia. I am told that the natives of the west coast are the shortest of the different races of the continent, and that these are most so in the arid regions are of an average height of seven feet, frequently attaining a still loftier growth. This is doubtless true, as it comes from sources that should be authentic. But those of the west coast are I have indicated to be the tallest, and very bulky of body, but their limbs are quite disproportionate, and I do not think them equal to the Caucasian race in point of physique. As in the case of the Terra del Fuegoans, the men and women dress alike, and are rarely distinguished from each other. They dress in long, loose robes, reaching nearly to the feet. They are excellent horsemen, and skillful hunters with their spears. They are also expert with the bow and arrow, and are the principal providers of horses (large herds of which range the country), ostriches and guanacos, which we have already described as being a species of llama. Besides these, there is a species of hare, several kinds of edible birds, and shellfish are most

abundant on all parts of the coast. The latter is one of the principal articles of food, and the manner of obtaining the oysters, clams and mussels is excessively primitive. The women dive for them. As the climate is very cold, the privations which these poor creatures undergo to supply the appetites of their selfish lords, with the luscious bivalves are very great. The water is always of a low temperature. I have seen these poor women kept in the sea for an hour diving for mussels, and, when they were permitted to come ashore, they were so benumbed as to be hardly able to stand. As soon as they come out of the sea, they are carried in front of blazing fires, where they are gradually thawed into their normal state. I think this must be a main cause for the paucity of the population of the country. If the increase in population at all, it must be very tardily. The women, on account of these cruel privations they undergo, are seldom so long lived as the men. Some of them are not devoted to beauty, but, as with our own savages, an excessive prominence of features is the ruling facial characteristic.

Another article of food which is much prized, is a species of wild celery which grows in great quantities along the coast, and is an excellent substitute for the only vegetable I saw in use among the natives. The people are very similar in disposition to their brethren of the Cape. Their voices are sometimes of surprising sweetness, although the language they use is harsh and guttural. They are not very cold, mild and serene temperament, but, when thoroughly aroused, exhibit passions of an ungovernable fury, which I have never seen equaled outside of Africa. Unlike the Terra del Fuegoans, they are a nomadic race. They wander from place to place, engaged in hunting and fishing, and in the course of a year probably traverse a distance of many hundred miles.

Their lodges consist of skins, sticks and earth, and are, owing to their temporary occupation, less substantial than those of the Fuegians. From what I saw, I should judge that the Patagonians are a much cleaner people.

We were on very friendly terms with them, and made them several presents of a useful character. They were very anxious to trade. In return, they brought us large quantities of shell-fish and the delicious wild celery.

CHAPTER IX.

HUNTING AN OSTRICH.

BEFORE we set out from the coasts of Patagonia, Captain Joker, together with several of his crew—myself among the number—who had ingratiated themselves in the good graces of the natives, received an invitation from the chief to go with him upon an ostrich-bunt in the interior.

We gladly accepted the offer.

The chief, whose name was Walgika—I spell it to produce the pronunciation as I remember it slightly—told us that he desired us to start, and promised to have the requisite number of horses in readiness. The party who were to accompany him consisted of the captain, the second mate (Pat Pickle), Tony Trybrace, Bluefish, Dicky Drake and myself. Dicky had special orders from the chief to be accompanied by presenting that individual with an old, dog-eared testament, which was looked upon by the natives as containing something of mystical import.

On the appointed morning, we duly landed, each provided with a musket, and were escorted by several natives to Walgika's lodge, which was located inland, about a mile from the coast.

When we came in sight of it, we saw that about twenty horses were in waiting, saddled and bridled after the primitive manner of the Patagonians.

The horses are not large, but are strong and very usually of an iron gray or steel blue. The "bridle" consists of a stout thong of hide made fast, from shifting, at the throat, but connect with a piece of hide of greater thickness, which passes through the mouth after the manner of a bit.

As I gazed upon these uncouth, strapping steeds, I must confess that my heart sunk within me, and, in imagination, I felt sore already at the thought of the long ride, and that I was so probably in store for us. But I put as cheerful a face on the matter as was possible.

The chieftain came out from his lodge, attended by numerous huntsmen, armed with their spears and bows, in readiness for the

chase. He greeted us cordially, and in a short time we were mounted and moving at a brisk pace for the prairie in the interior, where the ostriches most do congregate.

It would be impossible to chase the ostrich successfully if he started as fresh as his pursuer, as they are not only far fleetier than the swiftest steed, but have also far greater powers of endurance. But they are in this regard inferior in Patagonia, by which the birds are taken at a disadvantage. It is one of the peculiarities of the ostrich of South America to always run before the wind, if possible, when pursued.

The strong gales that are prevalent, and, indeed, almost incessant, in this region blowing against their plumes from behind, thus serve to give them a considerable acceleration of speed. Therefore, when a Patagonian chief decides to have a day of ostrich-hunting, he usually, the night beforehand, sends some of his people twenty or thirty miles down the coast (that is, if a south wind is blowing, for instance.) These outriders then proceed inland, and slowly drive what birds they may meet with northward. The men do not approach near enough to cause any excessive alarm, but maintain a sufficient distance, and the result is that the birds are driven in a moderate trot before the wind, giving them no time to halt for any considerable length of time. In this way, they keep them almost perpetually on a trot for the entire distance of twenty or thirty miles, without any stop. Then the sagacious chief, with his train of hunters and men, do not have much difficulty in running down the poor ostriches, already fatigued from their long thirty-mile trot. In this way the endurance of the ostrich is tested by the combined action of two stout horses, and, of course, is found wanting.

Dicky Drake, when he heard of this *modus operandi*, swore that it was a mean, unfair thing on the ostrich, and vowed, if it wasn't for the sake of seeing the thing through, he would drop this business.

Well, our outriders had been dispatched down the coast on the preceding night, and Walgika assured us we should meet with excellent sport. The inevitable, incessant rain of Patagonia was falling, but not heavily, and we had come to look upon a mere drizzle almost as a sunny day.

At length we broke from the rough country, upon a bare hill, whence, far below and beyond us, rolled the glorious land of the pampas—portions of it almost as level as a floor, but the ground so short that the hills and ridges were seen. A large troop of ostriches were feeding below us, and we could see several herds of horses and guanacos in the distance.

Walgika immediately gave the signal to charge, and with a ringing shout, we dashed down the hill upon the astonished ostriches, who immediately started off at a tremendous pace.

"They run well for having just finished a twenty-mile trot!" said Tony Trybrace, who was riding at my side.

I thought the same thing. But we had not got very far before we heard a cry in our rear.

Walgika turned and then gave the signal for a halt. When we looked back we perceived one of the natives pursuing us at a great rate, and, reaching us in a few moments, he was seen pursuing the wrong flock of birds. Those which had been specially fatigued for our benefit were feeding some miles further inland. So, with many a joke at our own mistake, we left the pursuit of the fresh flock—and it would probably have been just as we got to the sea, we kept it up—and proceeded eastward, over the pampas, to find the tired game.

We came upon them in about half an hour. And this time it was no mistake. Although the birds ran very swiftly at first, several of them were so fatigued that they fell. They began to drop behind each other. We could see them flap their little wings painfully, as they panted on before our fresh and momentarily roaring steeds. At length, one of the poor creatures stopped and laid down, at the same time extending its head despairingly along the ground, and tacitly receiving the deadly arrow of the nearest horseman.

We rapidly gained on the whole flock and were soon in the midst of them, knocking them down every where. I got shot, as a very young bird and laid him low, while, almost simultaneously, Tony and the captain each brought one down. Bluefish also did well, but little Dicky Drake, as usual, made a laughing-stock of himself. His tender heart got the better of his courage, and as we got in the midst of the flock, and he conceived the brilliant conception of taking one of the birds alive,

Springing from his horse, he made at a very large ostrich with outstretched arms, when he received a most unmerciful kick from the powerful leg of the bird, which doubled him up and laid him sprawling. Nevertheless, he was plucky and immediately got up to try it again. This time, evading the legs of the bird, he made a spring and alighted upon her back, when the bird, no longer so extremely terrified, in this manner summoned her remaining equals and started on a brisk run. Dicky crouched to her, probably as much frightened as she, and bellowing like a good un amid the noisy laughter of all the huntsmen.

"But the bird ran only a few rods before she dropped and expired, and the amateur hunter returned to his horse looking rather sheepish.

We killed about thirty birds altogether and took up our homeward way with our horses heavily laden, after having enjoyed the novel sport hugely.

We saw vast herds of guanacos, as well as a great many horses on our way back, but we were in no mood to take another chase, although the opportunity was very tempting.

I here also had the opportunity of seeing, for the first time in my life, that enormous bird, the Condor of the Andes. He had been feeding upon a dead guanaco, and as we approached, he started at our approach, rose slowly up with a guttural cry and flew toward his mountain home. I let off my gun at him at rather short range, I thought, but without effect.

The reports of the size of this bird have been greatly exaggerated, but I am sure this one was twice as large as the largest eagle I ever saw. The condor flies higher than any other bird and is only found in the Andes of South America—usually frequenting the most elevated and inaccessible parts. Its strength is prodigious. Walgika informed me that it was not an unfrequent thing to see them seize upon and carry off the guanaco; and this animal is of about equal weight I think with the merino sheep.

CHAPTER X. VALPARAISO.

In a few days after our ostrich-hunt, our preparations for leaving Wellington Sound and our kind Patagonian friends were complete. Walgika was very pressing in his desire for us to depart, and we were in some haste. As we were, we could desire, but duty was duty, so we bade farewell to him and his people, and hoisted sail.

The American Government had agents in the Chilean port of Valparaiso, whom it was important that Captain Joker to see, and it was therefore decided to make sail in that direction. Another inducement for entering Valparaiso was our scarcity of hands, owing to the depletion our crew had suffered through the many detachments we had been compelled to make in the way of prize-crews. We hoped to obtain some recruits among the merchantmen of Valparaiso. But there was even more difficulty in entering this port than we had experienced at Rio, because the former was then one of the principal rendezvous of the British Pacific squadron, and we expected little mercy if we should be so unfortunate as to run afoul of one of them.

Nevertheless, we had been so successful thus far that we were not by any means specially apprehensive of the future. The only man since we started. But now, on our way to Valparaiso, there was a little event happened on board the *Queer Fish*, which, though it at first appeared trifling, was afterward viewed in the light of importance.

One day, when Warner, our pretty cabin-boy, received a severe contusion of the head by a fall down the companionway, and had to go under medical treatment in consequence. He had always been exceedingly quiet and reticent, but was beloved by the whole crew on account of his gentleness and beauty. Ever since I have now evinced for him from every quarter. The captain especially was very considerate. He allowed Roddy Frinn to be nearly altogether excused from duty, in order that he might wait upon his little lum—a favor for which Roddy was exceedingly grateful. The doctor—I have forgotten to mention him; he was a good old body by the name of Benedict—the doctor was very attentive to Willie Warner, and always had something encouraging to say about his case.

But, one day, we noticed Doctor Benedict come hastily up from below, looking very queer

in the face. He went up to Captain Joker, and spoke apart with him in low tones, when they both looked pretty serious, and there was an expression on the captain's face which I—hey! they all ways smiled more or less—which I had never noticed them wear before. Well, we didn't know what to make of this mystery; and it was not cleared up for a long time afterward.

Willie got well and returned to his duties at the cabin, and he was, somehow, kinder and more gentle with him than they had ever been before, and his duties were made as light as possible.

Before Willie's convalescence was thoroughly over, he was invited by Valparaiso, and did not dare to enter openly, for fear of being stopped at the entrance by a British man-of-war. We expected a signal from our agents, and hung off the coast a long time, watching for it. But none appeared, and Captain Joker resolved to attempt an entrance at his own hazard.

Luckily, he was perfectly familiar with the harbor, and, choosing a dark and stormy night, we succeeded in running in, without meeting any molestation.

The tempest went off during the night, and the harbor was calm of the ensuing morning saw us riding safely at anchor, not forty fathoms from the city's wharves.

Valparaiso was a city of much less importance than then than now, but it was, nevertheless, a smart seaport for that remote portion of the globe. It is built on a steep, rocky, and jagged edge, with the grand mountain-wall of the Andes running so stiffly, loftily and impenetrably up behind, that you wonder how the rays of the rising sun ever reach the little city nestled at their rocky feet. At least, that they must, and we saw the bright of the level pampas beyond many moments before it surmounts those mountains to reach the narrow strip of plain between them and the sea. There is a fine cathedral in the city now, but when I was there, the largest establishment of this kind appeared to be a small structure. It was surmounted by a great red, wooden cross, and every morning and evening, we heard the sweet music of the Catholic service come floating to us over the waters of the bay.

Only remained in this port a few days, but, while at anchor there, I was a party in a kind of sport seldom, probably never, met with in any other portion of the globe. This was nothing more nor less than a hunt for electric eels.

Tony Trybrace and I became acquainted, while at Valparaiso, with a Chilean gentleman named Jose Gonzales. He possessed a large landed estate in the interior, and, when Tony had told him of our ostrich hunt in Patagonia, he invited us to visit him at his country place, and to see the ostriches. He was, at least, a more novel character. Dicky Drake begged us to have the invitation extended to him also, which was readily complied with by Don Jose. And, one morning, having obtained a three-days' "leave" of Captain Joker, we mounted some fine mules, and set forth with our pleasant host. A portion of our journey lay through mountain land—the outskirts of the Andes, and we had a good opportunity of observing the inhabitants of the country.

Chile is, at present, considered, and with justice, the first of South American countries in point of everything pertaining to population; and evidences of her future were not lacking in the year 1812. The Spanish population of the mountain region were a simple and hardy race; those occupying the fertile plains, and the stranger to warn toward them with a kindly thrill.

We saw a great many of the llamas of the country, more condors, as well as monkeys, and many other strange and interesting individuals of the country.

A ride of about six hours from Valparaiso brought us to the ranch of our host. It was most beautifully situated on the fertile tableland, and made me in love with South American rural life. As we approached the mansion, we passed several black-looking procs, or l'coons, and were much surprised when told, by our host, that they were to be our hunting-grounds.

As we rode by the largest of these lagoons, which were situated at a distance from the ranch, Don Jose drew a blacut from his saddle-bag and tossed it into the middle of the still, black waters. Instantly, and before it touched the surface, the lifeless-looking lagoon was filled with a strange and horrible existence. The birds, the small reptiles, and the huge snakes, rose suddenly to the surface, and engaged in a furious combat for the floating biscuit. Presently we saw the

little fins on either side of their necks, and we then knew them to be eels. Some of them were very large—from six to seven feet in length, I should judge—but they averaged much briefer length. Presently one of the larger snapped the biscuit under the water, which caused a sudden disappearance of the eel. The little fellow, however, swam around the edge of the turn, in hopes of more food, projecting its shining head out of the water, and even climbed up the slimy bank, eyeing us with a peculiarly villainous gaze from its dull, leaden-colored eyes. Here was a chance for hands into the water, and, of course, there was no liability of a scrape that he did not seize with avidity.

"I'll never want a specimen of that cuss for my old uncle's cabinet at hum', and here's my chance!" he exclaimed, springing from his mule, and advancing, with hands already outstretched; while from the peculiar expression of Don Jose's features, Tony and I suspected that there was something in the wind.

"I've got yer, yer varmint!" exclaimed Dicky, stooping joyfully over the reptile.

"Bray! bray!" he cried, than over he went, head over heels, with a bellow of pain, at the same time dropping the "critter" as if it was a caudent thunderbolt.

"Don't give it up, Dicky! At him again!" roared Tony through his laughter.

"Bray! bray!" he cried, than over he went, head over heels, with a bellow of pain, at the same time dropping the "critter" as if it was a caudent thunderbolt.

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the chaparral and thick-growing cacti of the border, and in a moment were in the center of the pool—which was but a few rods in diameter.

Then commenced a scene which completely beggars description.

A most furious contest commenced between the eels and the electric eels—who, thus suddenly aroused and trampled upon, were striking their strong enemies with all their power. Now and then an eel or two would flash up through the surface, but they were mostly invisible. The horses plunged frantically, and in a moment were a formidable sight. They bit at the water, snickered, and endeavored to reach the tank, but in vain. Stricken down by their unseen foes, many of them lost their legs, and went down, with difficulty keeping their heads above the water; and those that fell back in the path of agony almost human-like. The appearance of the horses was most agonizing. Their manes fairly bristled with horror and pain, while it made me sick to hear their cries. The mules also suffered terribly, but not quite so acutely; it seemed to me, as the horses clutched at the water, that the scene immensely, shouting and crying out in the exuberance of their joy.

The singular contest lasted fully ten minutes, when it became evident that the fury of the attack of the eels was sensibly abating. In a few minutes the horses and mules calmed down, and the horses and mules totally ceased. Those which had fallen regained their feet, and the whole herd, after quietly drinking their fill, left the pool, and galloped off over the pampas.

The reason of this was that the electric power of these eels becomes completely exhausted, and expended after it has been exercised malignantly for a certain time, and it requires several hours of rest to recuperate their electric power. And during this time they are powerless of harm.

At this time the peons advanced into the lagoon, brandishing their spears, while the Don, Tony, Dicky and myself dismounted and stood on the margin, watching our chance. The peons drove their prongs along the bottom, spiking the enfeebled reptiles, which they threw on the shore. In a minute the water was filled with the spears, drove them toward our position on the bank, where we soon had our fill of the sport. The eels came up, first singly, then in knotted masses, and we darted our spears into them at our pleasure.

As I enjoyed the sport hugely, but, as usual, met with some mishap. He had taken off his shoes, and was toddling barefoot in the slime, when he accidentally trod on an eel which had been prudent enough to hold off from the attack on the horses.

"Did you ever tread on a paper of red-hot pins?" he asked me at the conclusion of the sport.

"Never did," I replied.

"If you'd like to know how it feels, just set yer foot on that air innocent lookin' varmint," said he, pointing ruefully to the reptile by which he had suffered; but I had no anxiety to make the attempt.

At length we grew weary of the sport, left the eels to the cars, and the capturing of which are much esteemed as an article of food—and proceeded on our return. Many thousands of eels were captured on that day.

We returned to the ranch and enjoyed ourselves in other, and less novel, ways than eel-catching.

Before we left, our hospitable host showed us some curious relics of the ancient Indian inhabitants. These, from appearances, seem to have been mound-builders. We saw one of the mounds which had been excavated, and Don Jose pointed out upon the floor and walls of earthenware and instruments of war—the latter fashioned of stone—which he had procured in the neighborhood.

We also made a short expedition with our host, to the crater of an extinct volcano, and looked down upon the vast plain which had once—long, long ago, perhaps—vomited fire and lava upon the plains below.

Thanking our host for the pleasure he had afforded us, we, at the close of the second day, set out upon our return to Valparaiso, at which place we arrived on the evening of the third.

Captain Joker having transacted his business to his satisfaction, and the coast being clear of British cruisers, we, shortly afterward, weighed anchor, set all sail to catch the trade-winds, and danced out seaward and westward, intending to make a short cruise among the British whalers of the South Pacific.

CHAPTER XI.

AMONG THE WHALERS.

ONE interesting point which we visited on our way westward was the Island of Juan Fernandez, which has been made so famous by the fabulous adventures of Robinson Crusoe.

The island is quite small and girt with a thin line of reefs through whose intricacies it is almost impossible for a vessel larger than a long-boat to make a channel. The island itself is surpassingly beautiful. It is one of those little heavens of the summer sea which forcibly recall the description of Tompion—

"Oh to burst all links of habit, and to wander far away,

From island unto island, at the gateways of the day.

Large constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,

Breaths of tropic shade, and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag.

Slides the bird o'er lush woods woodland, swings the trailer from the boughs of Paradise.

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree.

Summers' days are hidden lying in the dark-purple spheres of space.

There, methinks, would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind.

In the long highway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have scope and breathing space:

I will take the wild savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-finch'd, supple-inew'd, they shall live and thray'shale.

Caught the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun:

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rain-bow's arch.

Not with blinder eyesight poring over miserable books."

We left this delightful isle astern and drove to the westward, capturing many whales by the way. We had succeeded in filling up our ship's company to more than repletion at Valparaiso, and now had prize-crews in abundance.

When we had been shot of men Captain Joker, in as many as three cases, had allowed valuable vessels to escape, and in consequence of this on account of not having sufficient men to put prize-crews aboard.

It had been frequently urged by the first mate to destroy such vessels (after the manner of Captain Semmes) but Captain Joker invariably refused to do so, and in consequence of this, in his rough, manly fashion, that he would sooner let the vessels go free than give them to the flames.

There was not much adventure in the capture of these vessels. It was merely a firing of a few shots across the bows of the blunt-bowed, heavily-laden craft, which seldom failed to bring her to, and then a peaceable taking possession of her. There was one instance in which there was a difference.

One day (in the latter part of October, I think) having a vessel to somewhere within two degrees southward of the Sandwich Islands, she was a whaler from Hull, England, and as we came up to capture her we engaged in the capture of a whale. All her boats were out in pursuit. When we boarded her (her name was the Jenny Hollins) the captain, swearing, in his true character, he immediately signaled his boats to return—or was about to do so, when Captain Joker stopped him with:

"Let them alone, my dear captain, they're very creditably engaged."

"But, sir," cried the English skipper, "I have surrendered to you. I do not care to have my men exposed to enrich your Government."

"My dear captain, pray let them alone. Boatswain," (turning to Tony) "ryback." "Just put the boats with the complement of men to follow the boats of the Jenny Hollins and see that they do their work well, and then order them to the ship. We cannot afford to lose a good whale in these times."

So, in spite of the mortified pride of the skipper of the Jenny Hollins, Tony set out in the long-boat, wherein myself and most of my chums were rowers. The whale-boats were busily engaged in tackling a huge whale, probably thinking our craft to be nothing more than a brother whaler, stopped to take pot-luck.

They had not rowed for several times, and he had come up to breathe for the last time, and to die, when we rowed up. Now, a sperm whale in his death-fury, as it is called, is not to be approached incautiously, without danger.

But we were by no means experienced whalers, and rowed in the most awkward manner, when, suddenly, we caught his tail squarely in

grief dwarfed all others in the magnitude of its agony. This was Roddy Prinn. The poor fellow went almost insane. Above all, he besought his captain to preserve the body of his little chum until our return to the island would enable us to accord a Christian burial on land to the remains. But, as we were yet within a hundred and fifty miles of our destination, compliance with this request was rendered impossible.

Poor Roddy then waxed violent, but was only confined in the gun-room. For, in keeping with the gentle treatment which Willie Warner had always received from the captain, he (Roddy) was treated with an inaccountable leniency. The fellow's mind was doubtless, somewhat deranged through his grief.

The day after the death of Willie Warner, the body of the little cabin-boy was consigned to the deep.

It was a sad and impressive ceremony.

All the crew stood around, with their heads uncovered, preserving a deep silence, while the funeral service was read in measured tones by Doctor Benedict. Then, with a heavy plunge, the shotted sack struck the blue waters, and the poor chum we had loved so much was lost to us forever.

On the same day, an excitement was created on shipboard by intelligence that Roddy Prinn had been tempted suicide, while in his confinement. We hurried upon deck, and, observing that Roddy was covered by Doctor Benedict just in time to be saved. As it was, he was almost exhausted through loss of blood, and was not able to be about for some days afterward. He next threw himself into the sea, out of the ports of the gun-room, but was rescued by Snollygoster. Roddy then seemed to give up self-destruction as a bad job, acted very rationally, and was allowed to return to his duty.

A few nights after this last attempt, it was my turn upon watch, and, observing that Roddy was more melancholy than usual, I resolved to keep a sharp eye upon him.

The night was one of surpassing beauty. I think I never saw so many stars as studied the glorious vault upon that night; and, presently, the stars, the moon, and the stars, shone above the ocean's edge, with a luster by which you could have read small print with no difficulty. In spite of myself, my attention was directed to the beauty of the heavens, and was captivated thereby by the most beautiful sight in the water, over the starboard bow.

Instantly divining that Roddy had made another attempt at suicide, I sung out, "Man overboard!" and ran to the bow.

We were completely befuddled, and, as the water was devoid of even a ripple, I could see far down into the sea. And, looking down, I was not long in discovering the figure of the unfortunate young man. Just then the captain, first mate and Doctor Benedict came to the bow, and looked down into the water.

Snollygoster had also heard the splash, had also rightly conjectured the cause, and was tearing off his coat and shoes, preparatory for a plunge to the rescue.

One remarkable thing in the appearance of the body of the beleaguered man was that it neither sunk any deeper, nor rose up, but appeared silently suspended, face downward, at a distance of several fathoms below the surface. We were at a loss to account for this singular phenomenon.

Suddenly Snollygoster went overboard with a sharp dive. The water was shaken so much by the plunge that we, for a moment, lost sight of everything below the surface. But the disturbance quickly faded out of the glassy brine, and we could see both the silent form of the diver and the active figure of the would-be rescuer.

We saw Snolly keep under the water by great effort and skill, and frequently touch the body of the man to the surface, but it as often resisted his grasp, first sinking under him, and then rising, and then settled down into quiescence, as before—with the head down, silently suspended in the blue crystal of the sea. After repeated efforts, all of which were unavailing, the heroic negro was compelled to come up to the surface for help.

"Try it once more—that is, if possible!" cried Doctor Benedict and down again went the indefatigable rescuer.

We, this time, saw him tug with all his force at the suspension in form of Roddy Prinn. The time he was more successful; for, suddenly, as if relieved of some heavy weight, the body became wonderfully buoyant, and swiftly rose to the surface of its own accord, whence, with the assistance of Snollygoster and a line from the Queer Fish, it was brought on deck. But all

restoratives were of no avail. The suicide was a fait accompli at last, and Roddy Prinn was no more.

"What caused the body come up so suddenly, Snolly?" asked Doctor Benedict.

"Bekase, Massa Bendick, I shook out de t'irty-pound shot which it held in de hands," was the reply.

It was true. In order to be successful in drowning himself, the suicide, before leaping over the taffrail into the sea, had firmly clutched in his two hands a thirty-pound cannon-ball. This had kept him silently suspended below the surface, until at last the cannon-ball being shaken from its hold by the rude grasp of the negro, the body had risen to the surface.

Whatever may be said of this singular suicide, it must be acknowledged that Roddy displayed considerable resolution in carrying out his intention.

Next day the body of this unfortunate young man was also consigned to the deep. And then the mystery, which we had noticed to exist between the captain and the doctor, leaked out, and became the property of all the crew. It was a man, but a woman, and that Roddy Prinn was her husband.

They had slipped on board the Queer Fish at the Boston docks, and it was only upon the occasion of the first outbreak of the pseudo-cabin-boy that her sex was revealed to the physician, and, through him, to the captain.

The reasons which induced the lady to assume the disguise of a sailor may have been known to the captain or doctor, but they never transpired among the crew.

In consequence of this we had many preposterous rumors afloat—strange stories where-in cruel parents, inexorable step-mothers, crimes committed on land, and other wild tales were ascribed to the lovers, whose lives were so mysterious, and whose deaths were so melancholy and strange.

But, however wild the stories may have been, and however far from the real history of the lovers, we held their memory dear, and, as time passed, the husband and wife kindred the gentle disposition of Roddy Prinn, our recollections of our pretty little cabin-boy, Willie Warner, were mixed up with purity and sweetness.

CHAPTER XIII. THE VOLCANO.

We must have been still fifty miles from our destination, when the bright and continued light to the northward made it evident that the great mountain of the Sandwich Islands was in active operation.

No one was especially apprehensive of this, for chances to witness volcanoes are not to be met with every day in the year.

As the night came on, the light to the northward became more and more vivid, and as we neared the islands, we could hear the roar of the volcano, resembling the rumble of distant thunder.

We drew within ten knots of the scene, and then the waves began to show a foundation in water about twelve fathoms deep.

The scene of a great volcano, in process of eruption, is an event to be remembered throughout one's immortality. Words can but faintly express its grandeur, its terrible splendor. The painter's brush is powerless here, even if wielded by the hand of genius.

The noise of the eruption was terrible as we cast anchor, and the waves were running high, although there was but little wind. From this circumstance we judged that the eruption was accompanied by an earthquake of no ordinary character.

Imagine to yourselves a lofty mountain-peak, surrounded by many others of lesser height and magnitude, piled around its base, and the rising of the smoke and steam. Then fancy this central peak to become an instrument for flooding the world with the original fire, and you may have some faint conception of the grandeur of the scene we witnessed.

As the smoke and the horizon's edge, were completely dimmed by the mighty effluence of the blazing peak, or blotted out by the dense volumes of smoke which drifted in the light breeze between the sea and the heavens like a pall for the world.

The whole of that side of the peak presented to our view was a liquid mass of red-hot lava. It rolled down the smooth slopes, or plunged from the cliffs in cataracts of living flame. We could see the ocean boiling along the shores as the hot rivers found their way to the water;

and millions of dead fishes floated by the ship on the surface of the sea.

The sides and rigging of the Queer Fish were covered with people who gazed long upon the terrible but fascinating scene.

The smoke which poured in black volumes from the crater of the mountain was usually intermingled with sheets of flame in about equal quantities; but sometimes the smoke would preponderate so much as almost to shut out the fire, while at others the crater would vomit flame alone, when the glare would be so distressingly vivid that we were compelled to shield our eyes with our hands.

The great ash-curtain which the eruption must also have been very great, for the deck of the ship was covered with a thin coating of it as it drifted about like snow, being so fine and dense as to render the air difficult to breathe. The eruption continued all night, and as there appeared no evidence that it would be likely soon to abate we hoisted anchor and sailed for California on the following morning.

CHAPTER XIV. CALIFORNIA IN EARLY TIMES.

We had succeeded much better than we had anticipated in making our own repairs, so that our object in making for the port of Santa Barbara was more to obtain fresh water and provisions than anything else.

But owing to this little port was attended by some rough weather, but on the whole we had not much to complain of throughout our entire Pacific Ocean experience. We made two prizes on the way. One of them was a British schooner, the Columbia River of tolerable value; the other was a rich whaler from Acapulco, on her way to the northern whale-fields, but already half-full of excellent sperm; and we also captured a schooner, but as she had nothing in her hold but basewort we permitted her to go. The crew of the schooner was not thinking her of sufficient value to warrant our depleting our company by another prize-crew.

We arrived at Santa Barbara in the early part of January—just at the close of the rainy season, and came to anchor close under the town, for the harbor is deep.

California in the time of which I treat was far different from now. With the exception of a few Mexican settlements along and near the coast, it was nothing but a wilderness. There was probably no house where the present fine and populous city of San Francisco stands, and very few settlements in that neighborhood of the coast—the northern part of which was but little known.

Santa Barbara was nothing but a collection of fifty or sixty adobe houses, with a large structure called (I could never understand why) the Fort, in which the Mexican commandant of the place made his residence. The coast range of the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Nevada, as we call it, was the back of the town, we could see lofty peaks uplift themselves grandly (though not so lofty as in the case of Valparaiso), some of them covered with perpetual snow. But their lower slopes are fertile and sunny, and the natives have been very busy in the raising of terraces upon them—terracing the steps to prevent the soil from washing down by the rains or the melting of the snows above.

Ships very seldom made a port of entry at Santa Barbara in those days, and the arrival of the Queer Fish was quite a great event among the inhabitants, who treated us with uniform kindness.

As with the other inhabitants of Spanish America, hospitality is a ruling and virtuous feature of the poor, ignorant Mexicans. Long ago, as we were told, the Spaniards were much among them, and was ever received with the open arms of hospitable friendliness by even the most ignorant and indigent among them.

We got excellent water at this place, as well as plenty of grapes and other fruit. As we were here for several weeks, we had many adventures on shore. One of the most interesting of these occurred shortly after our coming to an anchorage.

Old Bluelish and myself had obtained permission for a short excursion to enjoy ourselves hunting, and, having each of us procured an excellent mule, set off at a brisk pace in the early morning. We were not long in getting through the mountains—wherein we saw several grizzlies which were too far off to be attacked, and we were soon on the level plains that lie to the westward.

We halted for refreshments at a little town called San Fernando, if I remember rightly, and then proceeded on our way, through a colony of mammoth grass, intending or hoping to kill some antelope farther on.

We had a first-rate day's sport, considering that we were sailors. We killed three antelope and about a dozen of the large hares, which have since won the name of jackrabbits. The name is not altogether inappropriate—so far as it applies to the animal's ears, which are of extraordinary length and size. The animals themselves are of the hare species. They do not run as fast as their but are a lot, and with surprising swiftness within. They are very large, much larger than the English hare, and are excellent eating.

It was growing late in the afternoon when we concluded to relinquish our hunt, and return home by land. So we slung our game across the necks of our steeds, and proceeded westward, over the faintly-distinguished trail whereby we had come.

We had not traveled many miles before we reached a singular and strange sight.

Old Bluefish called my attention to a great dust in our advance, which we soon perceived to be caused by four Mexican hunters in pursuit of a grizzly bear. We took our stand on a little eminence, and waited to see the sport.

The bear could not escape the net as the hordes of his pursuers, and on they all came at a terrific pace, the Mexicans shouting at the top of their lungs and brandishing their lassos at a great rate. We now saw that their intention was to take his hind flip alive.

Just where the grizzly came opposite our point of observation, one of the Californians let his lariet fly, and, catching Bruin by the hind paw tripped him up, while the rest of the horsemen began to circle round and the beast on their wild steeds, swinging their lariets, and watching for a chance to moss the monster.

The latter rose up on his hind feet, clatched the line which held him, and began to draw his entrapper toward him—horse and all. I never saw a more striking instance of the great muscular strength of the grizzly than this. He seemed to draw the horse and rider toward him with the most perfect ease.

We expected to see the Californian draw his knife and cut the line immediately, thus releasing himself from this unexpected predicament. But he did nothing of the kind. He retained his seat with the most perfect coolness—exhibiting his exquisite horsemanship in so doing; for, although the horse which he bestrode gave him the most violent and violent jolts, he kept him in perfect subjection to his will, and calmly allowed the bear to pull him forward inch by inch.

I was almost ready to yell out with excitement when I saw the fearless horseman dragged up to within a few feet of the ferocious beast. But, at this instant, while went another lariet through the air, and Bruin was caught around the gullet and choked so fast that he could hardly breathe. This caused him to release his hold on the line, his entrapper and make of the new assailant. But another moss quickly followed the second, catching him by one of his forepaws, while his remaining hind-foot was quickly caught up by the remaining hunter.

Four Bruin was fairly in the toils, for his prodigious strength could now avail him nothing.

The horsemen commenced circling around him from their swift and well-trained steeds, in such a manner as to wind their long, stout lariets of hide repeatedly round the body and limbs of their prey. When he was no longer capable of effective exertion, the horsemen dismounted, and completed their work by a few ingenious knots, so that the bear was completely powerless.

A light wagon or cart, which had been waiting in the distance, then came up, and, after a great deal of pulling and hauling and leverage, the monster was safely loaded.

We now made our appearance, and made friends with the Mexicans as well as imparted knowledge of their language would admit of. We were surprised and gratified to learn that the bear had been entrapped for a show—a bear and bull fight—which was to take place at Santa Barbara in a few days.

So, as we all had our destination, we started homeward together dark.

CHAPTER XV.

BULL VERSUS BEAR.

Two days after this, a great festival came off, and almost all the people of the Queer Fish were on horse to see the fun.

It was a holy day, and a singular institution, if the one about to be called may be considered a fair sample of them all.

Church-going forms a small portion of the ceremonies. It is true, the priests went through the town in the morning, jingling their little bells, and making a noise which the people of the place almost prostrated themselves before them, and the miserable old bell in the belfry of the adobe cathedral kept up a dismal clang all the time, as if tolling the burial service of all mankind. But then, a few years later, and the population of the town, and the number of the officers of cannon at imaginary demons in the air—the priests directing the guns to the proper spots. I could not believe this at first, and it was only upon diligent inquiry that I found it to be true. But I never before heard of this duty being numbered among the sacerdotal functions of any country—even those of a Catholic persuasion.

Horse-racing was the next celebration in order, and we experienced considerable pleasure seeing the Californians compete with each other on their swift steeds.

After the horse-racing came the bull and bear fight, in which old Bluefish and myself evinced an especial interest.

A broad tract of sward was inclosed in palings and rode outside the town, and the ocean-shore. Long before the animals appeared, the merry people of Santa Barbara crowded round this inclosure, smoking their cigarettes and having a good time generally, while the distinguished visitors from the Queer Fish were as yet to go. We observed a number of men with a little pavilion, which was reared at the command, and for the benefit of the commandant and his family.

We waited a good while, but it was almost sunset when the heat was not oppressive. At last, amid the cheers of the populace, the cart appeared bearing the grizzly. He was driven, still bound, within the inclosure, and there dumped unceremoniously upon the ground. He was a fine and powerful animal, and was driven into the inclosure. While he was prancing and bellowing about, taking his "hearings," the strong gates of the palisades were closed, and one of the Californians, who officiated, proceeded to cut the thongs which held the bull by the nose, and to lead him to the end of a long pole, thus enabling him to perform the operation and stand outside the stockade at the same time.

Released from his long confinement, Bruin stretched to his feet and stretched his hide. He was pretty soon himself again, and now began to eye the bull with suspicious glances, keeping on the opposite side of the ring, and not seeming especially anxious for a nearer acquaintance.

The bull appeared somewhat more belligerent, but like a soldier to command, he would advance this way and that, pawing the ground and lashing his flanks with his angry tail, while the great bear—which probably outweighed his antagonist by several hundred pounds—stood on his hind legs, and with his snout lifted as the bull did, keeping his nose close to the ground, but apparently ready for any emergency.

The ceremony of making each other's acquaintance becoming rather tedious to the impatient spectators, the latter bore the grizzly shriek in a hideous manner, in the apparent hope of inducing a commencement of the scrimmage. But both bull and bear still being wary and cautious, the man who had cut the thongs of the latter, and who was to goad the bull and then the bear with his pole-knife.

This had the desired effect, for presently the bull lowered his horns, and rushed upon the bear with a fierce bellow. Bruin took it coolly, cool on his hind legs avoided the coming horns, and fetched his antagonist with a swipe with one of his terrible forepaws that the bull staggered back to his side of the arena, with one side of his neck raw and bloody.

But Bruin, elated with his success, no doubt, for he had not yet tasted blood, rushed at his antagonist, fetching him another wipe between the hips, but receiving, in his turn, one of the formidable horns under his left shoulder, which seemed to paralyze one of his paws. He then retreated in his turn, walking on three feet, and watching the bull with a distrustful wariness.

The spectators were very much excited at this exhibition, and began to make wagers as to the result of the combat. But I took notice that almost all of them preferred to let on the bull.

At length the bull lowered his head again and made another rush, but only to be repulsed a second time by his powerful antagonist. But this time the "round" was much more protracted than before, and both of the beasts were much injured.

The bear moved about with evident pain, but his injuries were more of the character of bruises than otherwise, while those of the bull were of a more serious nature. The fight, which were already beginning to tail painfully upon him. His courage was sublime. He did all the attacking, charging repeatedly, in spite of the terrible slashing he received from the forepaw of the grizzly, until at last his sides were streaming with gore, and his eyes were almost blinded with his blood.

But now the bull, evidently feeling that his strength would soon be exhausted, gathered himself up for a prodigious effort, and sprung forward, adversary with the momentum of a locomotive.

In vain did Bruin lash out with those long sharp talons of his; the bull would not be denied, and goring him to the ground, fairly pinned him to the earth of blood. One of his hind legs he bore by the neck and the other pierced deeply into his breast. The bear bellowed with pain and fought with all his paws, but his struggles grew gradually feeble, and the bull held him down bravely, until at last the movements of Bruin were altogether, a token that he breathed no more.

Then, and only then, did the bull extract his horns from the fallen body and lift his bloody head. The plaudits of the spectators rang loud, but the brave bear could no longer stir a finger, for he had fallen in the center of the arena and expired. His victory had cost him his life.

CHAPTER XVI.

ACAPULCO—ANOTHER YARN FROM BLUEFISH.

AFTER a delay of a week or more with our friends at Santa Barbara we weighed anchor one bright morning in the middle of January and started southward for Acapulco, intending to pick up the prize which had chance to cross our path on the way thither.

But our passage southward was scarcely broken by a single event so important as the capture of a British trader. We had splendid weather all the way down.

When we were about halfway down the coast I witnessed that phenomenon of the desert and of the ocean which is denominated a mirage. It happened just about an hour before sunset. The day had been characterized by a peculiar kind of heat, and the sun, which shone brightly, and vapor completely blanked the western horizon, and was smitten by the beams of the descending sun into many beautiful hues, when—about the time before mentioned—the lookout suddenly sung out:

"A sail on the larboard bow!" then again in a few seconds:

"A sail on the starboard bow!"

At last he sung out in a tone of amazement:

"Sails all around the ships!"

This was a very extraordinary sight, and the sailors, not on the ocean, but high up in the misty air, and probably belonging to those vessels which came to the post in his visions, when he

"Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
 Fleets of the purple twilight, dropping down with
 Hail of the heavens fill with shouting, and there
 raised a ghastly dead
 From their graves, airy navies grappling in the central blue."

Some of these visionary vessels were very distinctly seen, with men on their decks and flags flying, but, as the apparitions were colorless, of course, the character of the airy flags could not be determined. We were almost

horrified while we were the witnesses of this strange phenomenon, and we held an hour or so to observe it in. But, as the night began to fall, an easterly gale sprung up, and, in a few moments, our "airy navies" vanished away.

We arrived at Acapulco after a long and arduous voyage of only a few days' duration, and remained there two days.

Acapulco was much then as it is now. It is a very solidly-built place, resembling Panama in this, and is indeed one of the most handsome and ecclesiastical buildings. The bay of Acapulco is one of the finest in the world—by far the finest in America. It is well sheltered, is capacious, deep and excellent in every respect. The region around Acapulco equals any in Mexico in point of fertility. The soil is a tropical fruit flourisher profusely, and most of us were down somewhat with dysentery, through indulging too freely.

Our ship was surrounded most of the time while in port by natives, most of them children, who came to the shore in great numbers. Probably no people in the world—except, perhaps, the natives

of the South Sea Islands—are so much at home in the water as these Mexicans of the Southwest Coast. They would swim and dance in the water around us by the hour, begging to have some one toss them a shell, or they have repeatedly tossed a small silver coin overboard into the sea, when one of these children of the waters would dive like a fish, catch the coveted coin before it reached a depth of many fathoms, and then come up as easily as a cork. Amphibiously, and then put it in his mouth for satisfaction and clamor for some one to try him again with a similar bribe.

The people are very ignorant, contented and happy. They have few or no cares to distract their attention. Their subservient of subsistence grows on the trees above their heads; and for clothing—they wear so little that it can hardly be taken into account as an item of expense.

It was intended to sail from Acapulco on a certain day in the latter part of January, but a severe storm sprung up in the afternoon which made it much more prudent to lie for a while longer under the shelter of the excellent harborage in which we were. Fortunately, the men were not aboard ship, and even in the worst of readiness for a start; on the morrow, wind and weather permitting.

It was on this evening, when a number of us were merrily gathered round our table in the saloon, discussing our progress, that the old Bluefish, upon earnest solicitation, spun us one of his exceedingly improbable yarns.

"Clearing his throat with a long pull at his glass of rum, and lighting a fresh pipe, he commenced his yarn of

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

"'Prapsom on yer," said he, "has hearn tell on the Phantom Ship, but I'll bet my old boots ag'in a new tarpaulin and westcut that none on yer ever was aboard of that craft, as my mother's son was, in the person of myself. Howsomenever that is neither this way nor that, for I must pick up the end of my yarn at a shorter beginning.

"'Twas opened all along of the schooner Jolly Admiral. I was a cabin-boy on ter. We had been to Hong Kong for a load o' tea, and was somewhat arwight Bombay and the Cape of Good Hope on a bright moonlight night in the month of June, when we first seed the Phantom Ship. We didn't know for a fact, but as my mother's son was within a quarter of a mile of her and saw her flimsy, threadbare canvas and the devil's blue-lights burning on her bowsprit and after-jib. We could see the captain and the crew go about on her in a ghostly sort of way. They all looked very melancholy and didn't pay any attention to us whatsoever.

"We could hear their voices, too, and jist let me tell yer, if you had heard them 'ere voices, you wouldn't want to do ag'in in a hurry. Well, all of a sudden, although it was a stiff breeze to speak of, the sails of the Phantom Ship belled out, and away she scudded to the southward like a streak of blue thunder stuffed with lightning, leaving us jist nowhairs at all.

"We was some what taken aback, but not so much surprised nuther, for, yer see, we had been made acquainted with the fact that them 'ere seas was particularly haunted by the devil's craft, and we was, therefore, sort of prepared for meeting her. But somehow, as soon as the critters faded away from our sight I jist whispers to myself, 'If ever I gets the chance I'm going to board that 'ere craft, or I ain't a Bluefish, but only a blasted mackerel.'

"It wasn't long afore I had the chance. Only two days after the old Phantom, the sea was swept by one of them 'ere orful hurricanes or simooms as is nat'ral to them parts. Although we was pretty well prepared to meet it, we was darned thin struck us so suddenly that we was almost thrown on our beam-ends. The night grew black as pitch, and I couldn't see a thing, your head afore your face if you was as white as a snowdrift. I never seed, afore or since, sich orful waves. You'd go down into the holers of 'em and think you'd never come up ag'in. And the wind—well, it's no use trying to describe one o' them 'ere simooms. Suffice to say that it lifted us clean out of the sea more than once, and sometimes carried us, like a Mother Carey's chicken, for a mile or two over the waves without touching a single crest.

"Is this story true?" here interposed with a solemn voice, quite aghest at the imagination of the old sailor.

"In course it is, yer lubberly son of a sea-cow. Does yer suppose a cove as old as I be wouldn't tell yer anything as wasn't right-down gas'-ne?"

"As I was a-sayin', the force of the wind was orful. Howsomenever, we had as jolly a little craft as ever cut blue water, and we weathered it travely. Sometimes, when the wind would sort of sink away a little, we would drive right through the big waves, until even our main-tops were all under water; but, as our hatches were clewed down and our deck was pretty tight, we allers came out of our troubles all right. Then the wind would start up again, and away we would go over the tops of the waves.

"It was on one of these occasions that our lookout sung out, 'Lights on the starboard bow!' In course, we was all curious enough at first; but, jist as we was up on a deck, what should we see but the Phantom Ship, holdin' right across our course, and we jist ready to run inter her larboard bulwarks with the next pipple we made. She had all her blue lights burnin', and sort of sink away a little, all around her. Notwithstandin' we was under bare poles, and found it hard work to keep from bein' blown skywards at that, the stranger had every stitch of canvas spread, and didn't seem to suffer anywise nuther. We didn't time to make many observations, however, before we struck the cursed thing right in her side, and began to shoot through her, jist as if she was made of smoke. I was stan'in' in the bows of the Jolly Admiral at the time. Now never I sing out to myself, 'I'm a darned tarnation, I made a jump and caught the ratlin' of the stranger, while the Jolly Admiral passed on her way and left me swingin' like a pendulum in the air.

"I fell down on the deck of the stranger, but immediately resumed my legs and took a survey of things in general. And the crew moped about the deck, attendin' to their duties, while the captain bellowed at his orders through a trumpet made of condensed wind, lined with pizen and treated many observations to the effect—

"At first none on 'em paid any attention to me. But at last the mate—an orful-lookin' cuss—came right up to me, grabbed me by the gullet, and dragged me to the quarter-deck, and stood me up afore the skipper of the Phantom Ship.

"'Here, Cap,' says he, 'is a little cuss of a cabin-boy, as was left behind by that infernal craft as jist ran through us.'

"(I forgot to mention as how the hole, which he made in the observation of me, through the stranger, bealed itself up ag'in in the most supernatural way in the world.)

"Well, the phantom skipper looked at me a moment without sayin' a word, even so much as a civil 'How d'ye do?' and then the orful 'lookin' cuss 'ere told me my fartin' was as liable across. His flippers were those of a skeleton, and his head was a reg'lar death's head, with eyes as burned like two coals of fire, while a pair o' cross-bones was suspended across his countenance. I suppose they was some sort of modern contrivance on account o' meritorious conduct. At length the critter spoke to me, an' his voice was orful strange. You could hear it very distinctly, but it sort o' seemed to come from a long ways off, jist like the voice of a specter.

"'What's the name o' that 'ere ship what jist ran through us?' says he, in a melancholy way.

"'Please yer Honor,' says I, respectfully touchin' my cap, 'it warn't a ship, but a sea-cow, the Jolly Admiral o' New Bedford.'

"'Ha, boy,' says he, 'dostest thou dare to banter me with thy jokes. Howsomenever, what's your name?'

"'Bluefish,' says I.

"'The man as was hanged?' says he.

"'The same,' says I.

"'Ha! it is indeed so!' he ejaculated, leamin' his chin on his breast, in a meditatin' mood. 'He was a nice man,' he added; 'he was also a good sort o' mine.'

"'Allow me to take your flipper,' says I, puttin' on a free-and-easy air. 'If allers gives me a vast amount of pleasure to meet any one as was on good terms with the old man.'

"'With a—' I grabbed him by the bony hand, but immediately let it go, and dropped like a piece of a thunderbolt, for it burned like a coal of fire. He contemplated me with an affectionate smile.

"'Yes,' said he, 'I knowed the old man well, and he was your mother's! Do you kno—'

"'I came mighty near marryin' that gal once myself!'

"'God forbid!' says I, with a unconscious shudder.

"When I said these 'ere words, the skipper's knees trembled, and he almost fainted away.

"'Young man,' says he, slowly recoverin' himself, 'be very careful how you utter the name of that individual on this 'ere ship, or we'll all be knocked into the middle of kingdom.' Tell me, says he, 'what was your name in boardin' this 'ere craft?'

"'I was jist sort o' curious ter see about the state of yer health,' says I. 'And now, it's all the same to you, suppose you put me ashore.'

"'Thou hastest thy wish, my son,' says he, in a kindly voice. And with that he laps me gently over the head with that 'ere trumpet of his, and I immediately sunk inter a deep state of non-sensibility.

"When I woke, I found myself sleeping quietly in my hammock on board the Jolly Admiral, and when I tells my story, all on 'em laughs at me, and even denies that there was any Phantom Ship at all.

"'But, a course, the old didn't make no difference to me, since it was all true.'

"'It was a dream,' suggested Tony Trybrance.

"'Certainly,' said I.

"'Anst, yer lubbers! Doesn't I know as what I know?'

And with this conclusive argument, Bluefish "turned in."

CHAPTER XVII.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

THE next day, the t-uptest having abated, and everything being snug on board the Queer Fish, we weighed anchor, took the northeastern trades on our top-gallants, and started on our return to our home.

"Every one was exceedingly jolly, as is usually the case on board a vessel homeward bound, after a long and prosperous voyage.

Very little occurred worth recording. We didn't meet with a single prize on our way to the Cape, but had another merry time with our Patagonian friends.

On the voyage up, on the Atlantic side, however, we captured four more prizes, one of them a very large and valuable ship, loaded down almost to the gunwales with coffee and spices.

When off the Bahama Banks, we were chased by a fast-sailing British war-vessel, and had our mizen-top knocked off by her bow-chasers. But we successfully returned the compliment with our swivel, and, as nothing could overhail the Queer Fish before a stiff breeze, succeeded in making our escape.

We arrived at Boston in the early part of March, after one of the most memorably successful voyages on record. Our prizes numbered thirty-two, and the crew, of these, all but one safely reached American shores.

So, with our pockets stuffed with prize-money, you may guess that we had a jolly time. My yarn is over, and you will hear no more at present from The Boy Privateer.

THE END.

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